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Thos. W. Higginson

June 29. 1883

THE SOUTH BOSTON UNITARIAN ORDINATION.

THE following pages contain the report of Mr. Parker's sermon, by Messrs. FAIRCHILD, DRIVER, and DUNHAM, together with the remarks upon that report and sermon in the BOSTON COURIER and other papers. They also contain the correspondence between Messrs. FAIRCHILD and LATHROP, and most of the other communications which have been published in relation to the same subject. As the public mind is deeply interested in this matter, we have thought that the community generally would be gratified to have it in their power to obtain, in a condensed and permanent form, all the most important communications which have appeared in different papers. Some pieces we must necessarily omit, lest our pamphlet should become too large and expensive for the object which we have in view.

THE PUBLISHERS.

UNITARIAN ORDINATION.

WE the undersigned, being present by special invitation, at the recent ordination of Rev. Charles C. Shackford as pastor of the Hawes Place Congregational Society in the Twelfth Ward of the city of Boston, heard a sermon preached by Rev. Theodore Parker of Spring street, Roxbury, in which sentiments were advanced so contrary to our ideas of Christianity, that we feel ourselves constrained by a solemn sense of duty which we owe to the Church of Christ, to inquire whether the Unitarian clergymen of Boston and vicinity sympathize with the preacher in his opinions as expressed on that occasion? We noticed as members of the ordaining Council, Rev. Dr. Pierce of Brookline, Rev. Messrs. Lothrop, Barrett, Robbins, Bartol and Sargent, of Boston, and Rev. Mr. Putnam of Roxbury, and several others. We hope it will not be deemed impertinent in us to ask, whether the clergymen who composed that Council sanction the sentiments of the preacher, or acknowledge him as a Christian minister? As there was no protest after the sermon by the moderator, or by any member of the Council against the sentiments advanced, we wish to know whether silence in this case, is to be construed into assent. We were hoping that when the venerable Dr. Pierce arose to offer the ordaining prayer, he would have remembered the Apostolic injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man;" and that he would have said to the candidate, "If your sentiments accord with those of the preacher, I cannot consecrate you to the work of the Christian ministry." But in this we were disappointed. We then hoped that when Rev. Mr. Lathrop proceeded to give the charge, he would have remonstrated against the sentiments proclaimed in the sermon, and solemnly charged the young man to avoid them as contrary

to the Gospel and destructive to the souls of men. But in this too we were disappointed. The ordaining prayer was made, the charge given, and the other services performed, without a single note of remonstrance. We reflected that we have friends whom we respect and love, who attend on the Unitarian ministry; and we were exceedingly grieved at the thought that they should sit under "that instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge," if the sermon then preached was to be regarded as a true exhibition of the sentiments of the Unitarian clergy. For the sake of these friends, therefore, we wish that those who participated in the services of that occasion, would declare explicitly whether they acknowledge Mr. Parker as a teacher of true Christianity.

In the following communication we have quoted, as nearly as possible under the circumstances of the case, the phraseology of the preacher. Much of it we know to be verbatim, and *all* the sentiments here expressed were avowed by him. And we are confident that if the sermon should ever be published precisely as it was preached, no candid man will say that our account of it is either exaggerated or unfair. One of our number took copious notes at the time, and another committed to paper what he could remember, soon after the services closed. If, however, we have done injustice to the preacher or the Council in any thing we have stated, let it be made apparent, and we will most readily correct it.

J. H. FAIRCHILD, *Pastor of Phillips Church.*

THOS. DRIVER, *Pastor of South Baptist Church.*

Z. B. C. DUNHAM, *Pastor of 5th Methodist Church.*

BOSTON, May 28, 1841.

TEXT.—*Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my word shall not pass away.*

It has been assumed that every word of the Scriptures was inspired, with all their vulgarities, absurdities, and impieties. Men have appealed to the Old Testament as authority, and condemned some of the most pious and devoted as infidels, because they could not believe all which is written in it to be inspired, where there is much never perhaps designed to be taken as truth. Thus questions have been settled by the authority of

the Old Testament. It has been assumed that the Old Testament in all its parts was inspired ; and men have been stigmatized as heretics and infidels who would not give up their reason and humanity to the belief of the story of Abraham and his son as of divine origin ; a story which is revolting to justice and humanity.

The same has been assumed of the New Testament, the obvious contradictions and absurdities of which are every where apparent ; and which contains stories the most incredible, and sometimes shocking to decency. And yet this book is declared to be the word of God, and given by divine inspiration ! What Apostle ever pretended that this book was divinely inspired ? Did Jesus Christ ever assume that he spake by divine inspiration ?

The great body of Christian professors make their doctrines rest on the authority of Jesus Christ and not on pure Christianity.

Real Christian life was *out* of the Church, and *in* the world for the first four centuries.

Doctrines have nothing to do with a man's Christianity.

Christianity would have lost nothing by the perishing of the Old Testament. It must therefore now be taken for what it is worth.

Every man is to search after truth for himself, without taking for his authority the writings either of the Old Testament or the New. And if different individuals should arrive at different results, and even opposite results, still this will not affect their Christianity, or authorize the withholding of Christian fellowship.

Christianity is true ; but all systems of Christianity are false.

Because some pious Christians have cut off the end of John's Gospel and the beginning of Matthew's, they have been branded as infidels.

Christianity does not rest on the opinions of a few pious fishermen, or on the New Testament. Christianity was the same nineteen centuries before Christ, as nineteen centuries after Christ.

The Bible is not our master, or despot. We may take the Prophets as our teachers ; but we must not bow down to their idol notions.

The Bible does not tell us that God exhausted his capabilities in creating Jesus Christ. We may yet expect men as gifted and elevated, or even more so, as Christianity is hereafter unfolded.

We are not saved by Christ who lived nineteen centuries ago, but by *the* Christ that we find in our own hearts.

If it could be proved that Christ never lived, or that he was an impostor, still Christianity would not be affected by it. So if

the Apostles had never lived, or were impostors, Christianity would still be the same. It was taught by Nature.

Christianity has no creed; or if it have a creed, it is a creed of only one article, viz. that there is a God.

Christianity must be tried by the oracle in the human heart.

We want no one to stand between us and God. If we would have the full benefits of a spiritual Christianity, we must worship the Father as Jesus did, with no intervening mediator; and then we shall be like Christ.

In the 'Puritan' of June 10th, appeared the subjoined note from the Rev. Mr. Folsom, who was a member of the Ordaining Council, and took part in the services on that occasion:—

HAVERHILL, MASS., *June 4, 1841.*

MESSRS. EDITORS:—I noticed in your last paper, a communication from three of the ministers in South Boston, relative to Mr. Parker's sermon at Mr. Shackford's ordination. As one of the Council, I think it my duty to state, that most of the ministers, and many of the society, expressed in my hearing on that day, the most decided dissent from the opinions advanced in that discourse; and some, the very strongest reprobation of them, as deistical. And those three gentlemen will doubtless recollect, that in the other performances, the recognition of Christ as Master and Lord, and of his gospel as words which he spake with authority, was full and explicit,—especially in the ordaining prayer, by the venerable Dr. Pierce, was it again and again made, with all his characteristic emphasis, and clearness, and solemnity. No one with whom I conversed, failed to speak of the contrast between the sentiments of the discourse, and of the prayer that immediately followed. If there were those who might imbibe the erroneous sentiments of Mr. Parker, the antidote was administered, as it seems to me, in a manner more effectual than the course your correspondents expected us to pursue. And, as the result proved, the people were of age, and could speak, and did speak, for themselves. It may suffice to say, in reference to our duty to Mr. Shackford on the occasion, that we could not consider him as answerable for Mr. Parker; that it was by choice of the Committee of the Society, with his approbation indeed, that Mr. Parker was invited to preach; that the same society, who afterwards expressed their disapprobation of the sermon, and were anticipating something far different, had heard Mr. Shackford for seven months, and in that time he had commended himself to them as one who preached, and would preach, faithfully and fearlessly, the gospel

of the New Testament, to their advancement in true Christian knowledge and holiness.

While I have said what I have, and confess that what I heard on that day, was to myself another gospel from what Paul preached, and what the New Testament teaches, and what is according to truth and reason, permit me to apply to Mr. Parker the words of Sir William Hamilton in respect to Cousin :

“Though no converts to his philosophy, and viewing with regret what we must regard as the misapplication of his distinguished talents, we cannot disown a strong feeling of interest and admiration for those qualities, even in their excess, which have betrayed him, with so many other aspiring philosophers, into a pursuit which could end only in disappointment ; we mean his love of truth, and his reliance on the powers of man.”*

NATHANIEL FOLSOM.

On the above note, the Editor of the ‘Puritan’ makes the following remarks : —

It appears then from the tacit confession of one of the council, that the abominable sentiments reported by Mr. Fairchild and others, were really uttered in that sermon. It appears furthermore that some of the ministers regarded those sentiments as “deistical.” But it is held that Mr. Shackford was not responsible for the sentiments of the preacher. If this had been the preacher’s first utterance of such sentiments, it might be so. But since Mr. Parker has in the most public manner repeatedly uttered sentiments as truly deistical before, and since Mr. Shackford must be presumed to have known this fact, when he gave his approbation of the choice of him to preach his ordination sermon ; he must, in the absence of proof to the contrary, be presumed to sympathize with him.

But it seems that other ministers expressed different views in other parts of the ordaining exercises. Yet was this all that was required of them, in the position in which they found themselves ? They stood before the people uniting with one whom one of the council now says preached “another gospel,” in ordaining a minister. And their union with him in that act, unless the whole proceedings were a miserable farce, was a constructive acknowledgment of his character as a minister of the gospel of Christ. And while they refrained from disowning him, as the preacher of another gospel, their hearers were left

* Edinburgh Review, Vol. 50, as quoted in Rev. Mr. Young’s Discourse at the ordination of Mr. Ellis.

to infer that what sentiments they uttered somehow consisted, in the main at least, with his.

It seems furthermore that the people are of age and could speak for themselves, and needed not a disclaimer from the council. That must be a rare congregation, all of whom are of age, having no children. But if this fact rendered a disclaimer of the rank deism needless, it also made the whole proceedings of ordination a mockery. The people were of age for that purpose too. What had that council to do in the case, if their acts implied no recognition of fellowship and harmony of views?

Furthermore, it seems that though Mr. Parker has adopted another gospel, and rejected that of Christ, yet Mr. Folsom admires Mr. Parker's *love of truth*. Yes, a professedly Christian minister (so recently an Orthodox minister,) admires a *confessed Infidel's love of truth*. Nay, he "cannot disown a strong interest and admiration" for that *excess of the love of truth* which has landed him in Infidelity. And how far is such an admiration from a sympathy with his views? *Facilis descensus Averni*.

Here is a simple fact, to which we call attention — the Unitarian ministers of Boston and vicinity have recently united with one, whom they confess to be a preacher of another gospel, in ordaining a man to the sacred office; thus publicly striking hands with one whom they declare to be a Deist. And for aught that appears, they intend to continue their fellowship with this Deist, acknowledging him as a minister of Christ. If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? We are no prophet nor prophet's son; but we expect that a few years will make some strange disclosures respecting the tendency of Unitarianism.

One word more. It is but about one short year since Mr. Folsom put forth a publication of hard things against us, because we disowned him after he had embraced another gospel. And now he is called to a practical test of his principles of Christian fellowship. He is found in the pulpit with the preacher of still another gospel. And by his own principles, he can neither own him nor disown him. And so he escapes from the dilemma by admiring the excess of his love of truth, which has unhappily led him to another gospel.

The editor of the 'Boston Courier,' in transferring the communication of Mr. Fairchild and others to his paper of June 11th, precedes it thus: —

THE NEW CHRISTIANITY.—The article below appeared last week in the 'Christian Watchman,' a journal conducted by

gentlemen of the Baptist denomination, and is transferred to this paper at the request of several respectable subscribers, who hold to the Unitarian faith. We do not wish to have its introduction into our columns taken as an indication that the 'Courier' can afford much space for the discussion of the questions involved in the article; but we think that no secular paper, unless ultra exclusive, can be supposed to treat it with indifference.

After copying the communication, he remarks upon it as follows:—

It seems to us,—if we may be permitted to give an opinion in the matter,—that there is a duty for the Unitarian Clergy to perform—and that is to say distinctly *yes* or *no*, to the question, *Is a preacher of such sentiments a Christian minister?* They claim to be Christian ministers: *Is he one of them?* Their *affirmative* answer to these questions would save a world of controversy, and render entirely superfluous the study and labor of many a sincere, honest, and pious young man, who devotes himself to the profession of what he believes to be the *Christian* ministry.

The same editor, in his paper of June 16th, says:—

With many of our fellow-citizens, who, like ourself, were shocked by the communication describing the Sermon of Mr. Parker, we had hoped to see, in the 'Christian Register,' the organ of the Unitarian Clergy, some decided expression of opinion touching the sentiments said to be advanced by Mr. Parker. The following is all that we find in that paper on the subject:—

"Three Trinitarian clergymen, viz: the Rev. Messrs J. H. Fairchild, Thomas Driver, and Z. B. C. Dunham, caused to be published, last week, in several religious papers of this city, a somewhat deceptive communication, occasioned by the Sermon preached by Rev. Theodore Parker at the late ordination at South Boston, in which they express a strong desire (the only motive they avow for sending such a document by so many channels through the land) to be *informed*, 'Whether the clergymen who composed that Council sanction the sentiments of the preacher;' and 'Whether the Unitarian clergymen of Boston and vicinity sympathize with the preacher in his opinions as expressed on that occasion?' We have used the word 'deceptive,' because the article is suited to give the hasty reader false impressions, not only as to the gentlemen's main object in preparing it, but also concerning the general character of the sermon to which they refer. Nevertheless, their questions, as quoted above, are, in themselves, fair ones; and, now that they are be-

fore the public, demand, for obvious reasons, a reply. We say, then, that the true answer to them is, decidedly and unqualifiedly, in the **NEGATIVE**.

“We will only add, that there is a way of seeking to increase sectarian ‘capital’ which is not good; that it is unjust as well as ungenerous to attempt, even by insinuation or interrogatory, to convey the idea that among freemen in Christ Jesus, one is responsible for the errors of another; and that whoever undertakes, directly or indirectly, to excite unfavorable prejudices in the community against a whole class of Christians by trumpeting the peculiarities of here and there an eccentric individual professing to belong to it, ought, at least, to be ashamed of himself.”

We speak for others as well as for ourself, when we say that this is altogether unsatisfactory. Whether the representation originally given of the Sermon be “deceptive,” either in the impressions it gives, or in “the main object of the gentlemen in preparing it,” is a question which those gentlemen will settle for themselves with their accusers. With that we shall not intermeddle. We are glad to see the unequivocal declaration that “the Unitarian clergymen of Boston do not sympathize with the preacher in his opinions as expressed on that occasion.” Had the Register stopped with their decided and unqualified answer in the negative, we might, perhaps, have been content to let the inquiry rest. But when such sentiments, though explicitly denied to be the sentiments of the Unitarian clergy, are gently dismissed as “the peculiarities of an eccentric individual,” we confess we do not feel quite easy. For the gentlemen who conduct the Christian Register we have a sincere and respectful regard; and we believe they will do us the justice to exempt us from the imputation of undertaking to excite unfavorable prejudices against the class of Christians to which they belong; but still we have a desire to know, if they consider “eccentric individuals,” who preach such “peculiarities,” as Christian ministers; and we are not “ashamed” to ask them, respectfully and earnestly, to inform a number of sincere and honest inquirers, who are, in no small degree, startled by the “peculiarities” alluded to, if we and our children can continue to frequent Unitarian places of worship, without the hazard of having our faith shaken, our confidence removed, our hopes utterly destroyed, and our religious affections sneered at and ridiculed, by some “eccentric individual,” who may be invited by our minister to perform a “labor of love,” or to aid him by an “exchange.”

In the 'New-York Observer' of June 19th, appeared the following letter :

BOSTON, *June 5, 1841.*

MESSRS. EDITORS,—In what I have written you concerning Unitarian affairs, the abolition of the Sabbath and of the ministry, and the like, you must have observed the repeated occurrence of the name of the Rev. T. Parker, of Roxbury. He it was, who said, in Chardon-street Chapel, that "Thus saith the Lord," in the Pentateuch, means only "Be it enacted;" and that Paul pronounced the Old Testament "a law of sin and death;" and who said in the Union Convention at Groton, that "Peter, misunderstanding the Old Testament, with right Jewish narrowness, declares, "there is no other name (meaning Christ's) given under heaven, whereby men can be saved." And again: "It yet remains for us to apply good sense to religion; when this is done, it will be of very little importance what a man thinks of the Old Testament or the New Testament, so long as he loves man as himself and God above all. Then the difference between the creed of Hopkins and Edwards, the dogmas about the miracles, the ascension, the resurrection even, and the inspiration of the Apostles, will be subjects of speculation for the curious, but which have as little to do with our religion, as a farthing candle has with the noon-day sun." No one, I believe, has ever pretended that the published reports of these remarks are in any degree inaccurate or unfair; or that they in any way do Mr. Parker injustice. Mr. Parker's opinions, therefore, were well known, before the events narrated in the following article, which has appeared simultaneously in several of our religious papers.

The article is here inserted, and the following remarks subjoined :

Among the Congregationalists, the preacher of an ordination sermon is usually selected by the person to be ordained, and is supposed to be one whose theological views he approves. While nothing appears to the contrary, therefore, it will naturally and reasonably be supposed, that Mr. Shackford's theology is substantially the same as Mr. Parker's. The choice of a preacher, however, must be ratified by the ordaining council. The members of that council, therefore, are in fact, and justly, held by public opinion to a certain degree of responsibility for the doctrines of the sermon; as, by their formal and voluntary act, they publicly treat the preacher and his sermon with a degree of respect, which has some influence in commending

both to the good opinion of the public. And moreover, while nothing appears to the contrary, whatever has the sanction of an ecclesiastical council is presumed to meet the approbation of the denomination to which the members of that council belong. The ordaining council at South Boston, therefore, and the Unitarian clergy generally, are placed by this sermon in a very undesirable position. If they continue silent, they will be held to a very unpleasant responsibility for Mr. Parker's sermon. It is utterly vain for them to think of avoiding this consequence, by any verbiage about "individual responsibility." The public will tell them, that their treatment of the subject and of the parties concerned in the transaction, encourages the propagation of Mr. Parker's sentiments; and the public has an evident right to tell them so. They must come out with some public, official act of disapprobation, or take the consequences; and one of the consequences will be, the loss of the confidence of all who think it important that men should feel confidence in the Bible.

But what shall they do? Shall they begin to "denounce men for their opinions?" Shall they exclude Mr. Parker from their fellowship, "because he does not think as they do?" Shall they be guilty of what they have so often called "ecclesiastical despotism?" This would be eating the most efficient words they ever uttered against the "Orthodox." It would be acting in direct opposition to their most eloquent harangues and most exciting appeals. It would be a practical acknowledgment, that in all those writings and speeches by which they have most effectually prejudiced the minds of men against the "Orthodox," they have been wrong. Can they afford to throw away such a weapon, and to blame themselves for having used it?

There is another difficulty in their way. If they censure a man for his opinions, they must begin to classify opinions; to draw a line between those which are censurable and those which are not. They must commence the work of deciding what a man may preach without forfeiting their fellowship, and what he may not. They must begin to make a list of articles, which a man must believe, or he cannot be in "regular standing" among them. In short, notwithstanding all they have said against such things, they must begin to form a "creed." It may not be drawn out on a paper, and called a creed. It may exist only in the minds of men, and the recorded decisions of councils may be its only documents; but still it will be a *creed*, to which candidates for ordination must assent, and to which ordained ministers must adhere, or be deposed. The formation of such a creed

will be no easy or pleasant task. By whatever process it may be accomplished, it must lead to debates and dissensions, such as they will be very anxious to avoid.

Some of them appear to feel keenly the difficulties of their position. They are unwilling to remain in their present connexion with those who propagate such rank deism; and yet they cannot bear to take the necessary measures for extricating themselves from it. They will probably continue to stand just where they are, giving consent, by their silence, to Mr. Parker's deism, and helping him, by the credit which he derives from their fellowship, to make deists; while those who have any reverence for the word of God, will be repelled from them in increasing numbers.

Meanwhile, let it be fully understood at the West and South, where Unitarians are endeavoring to make proselytes, that Unitarian ministers are not always Christians, even in theory. As they have no creed, and no discipline, either for laity or clergy, their regular standing is no evidence of any thing, except that the man is not "orthodox."

In calling Mr. Parker's doctrine *deism*, I use language according to its well established signification. Examine dictionaries, encyclopedias, systems of theology, standard writers of any class, for the definition of deism, and then read over the passages here given from his ordination sermon, and you will find that they contain the very doctrine which, according to the usage of all good writers, that word is employed to designate.

But enough for once. If these things lead to any further developements you shall be informed. Yours, truly,

J. T.

The following letter appeared in the 'Courier' of June 19th:
TO THE REV. J. H. FAIRCHILD:

Circumstances which I need not detail, prevented my reading the letter signed by yourself and two other clergymen of South Boston, and recently published in the 'Christian Watchman,' till I met with it in the 'Boston Semi-weekly Courier' of the 14th inst., otherwise I should have earlier made this communication. With the objections you make to Mr. Parker's sermon, and the synopsis you have given of it, I have nothing to do. I should probably object as strongly as yourself to some of the principles and assertions contained in the sermon, and as the discourse itself is soon to be published, entire and just as it was preached, the public and yourself will be able to judge how far

you have been just, accurate, and candid, in the account you have given of it.

As you have proposed a question to the members of the council assembled at the ordination at South Boston, I presume if that is answered, you will have no objection to answer in return, any question which a member of the council may propose to you. You ask, "whether the clergymen who composed that council sanction the sentiments of the preacher, or acknowledge him as a Christian minister?" I answer, that no Unitarian clergyman feels himself responsible for his brethren, or authorized to speak for them. We recognize no creed, covenant, or union of any kind, that interferes with individual liberty and independence. I cannot answer, therefore, for all the members of the council, and I can only speak for myself. And for myself, I am free to say, that I do not approve of some of the sentiments advanced by Mr. Parker. I most seriously and solemnly protest against them. They seem to me to undermine the very foundation of all Christian faith, and to be at variance with Christian truth; as much so, in my judgment, as some of the sentiments and doctrines which you yourself entertain and preach. I am free to answer further, that if I entertained some of the opinions which I understood Mr. Parker to present, (I may have misunderstood him,) I should think that I ought to leave the Christian pulpit; that it was no longer the place in which I ought to stand, as a professed Christian teacher; but, if Mr. Parker thinks otherwise, if he can find a people willing to hear him, and ministers willing to exchange with him, that is his affair and their affair, and not mine.

Having thus answered, so far as I am able, your question, will you permit me to propose one or two to you? While, from your general knowledge of the opinions of Unitarians, and that acquaintance with their writings, which as a Christian theologian you ought to have, you might have been satisfied that the sentiments expressed by Mr. Parker were not in harmony with those commonly entertained by that denomination, were you not also, on that very afternoon after the ordination, or within a few days subsequent, and before the date of your letter, informed by one or two Unitarian clergymen, especially by one whose standing, experience, and intimate acquaintance with most of the Unitarian clergy, authorize him, so far as any one can be authorized, to speak for the body, were you not, by this individual, expressly assured that the sentiments of Mr. Parker *were not approved by Unitarians*? If you were thus informed, may I ask, what was your object and motive in associating yourself with two other

clergymen of South-Boston, and making, with some parade, a public inquiry relative to a matter, in respect to which you had already been informed, and in respect to which you might have given similar information to these clergymen, had you chosen to do so? Did you not know, were you not as well assured before you wrote and published that letter, as you could expect to be afterwards, that the sentiments of that sermon were not in harmony with the principles and opinions commonly entertained by Unitarians? What was your object and motive, then, in making this public inquiry? I will not so far reflect upon your understanding as to suppose that you would attempt to make the members of the Council or Unitarians generally responsible for Mr. Parker's individual opinions, and thus bring additional odium upon a denomination, all of whom you and your brethren are accustomed to regard as infidels and heretics, whose churches and ministers have no claim to the Christian name or Christian privileges. You know very well that neither the members of the Council nor Unitarians generally can be considered thus responsible for Mr. Parker's individual peculiarities of opinion. As well might the professors at Andover, where Mr. Shackford passed a portion of his theological noviciate, or the association of Orthodox ministers, who approbated him to preach, be held responsible for his present Unitarian opinions! What, then, was your object in this public inquiry?

Again you say, "We were hoping that when the venerable Dr. Pierce arose to offer the ordaining prayer, he would have said to the candidate, 'if your sentiments accord with those of the preacher, I cannot consecrate you to the christian ministry.' But in this we were disappointed. We then hoped that when Rev. Mr. Lothrop proceeded to give the charge he would have remonstrated against the sentiments proclaimed in the sermon, and solemnly charged the young man to avoid them as contrary to the Gospel and destructive to the souls of men. But in this, too, we were disappointed."

In reference to the passage I have just quoted, I have two questions I wish to ask, one a matter of opinion, the other a matter of fact. How far do you think it proper or necessary for a person to make the service he performs at an ordination a remonstrance to the service performed by some other person, with whose sentiments he happens not to concur, and thus convert this solemn occasion into one of personal contention and controversy? I did not approve of some of the sentiments expressed by Mr. Parker; I did not and do not concur in them; neither did I approve or concur in some of the sentiments ex-

pressed by Mr. Putnam in his address to the people, or by Mr. Sargent in his Right Hand of Fellowship. Must I therefore get up and express my disapprobation and non-concurrence? I have seldom attended an ordination where every thing that was uttered perfectly harmonized with my own opinions and feelings. Was I bound or had I a right to interrupt the service by a remonstrance? Would it be an improvement in the services of an ordination to conduct them upon the plan implied in your remarks? You say that you expected a remonstrance from Dr. Pierce and Mr. Lothrop, and were disappointed. Your remarks imply, and seem intended to imply, that in the services offered by these gentlemen, nothing counter to the opinions presented in the sermon was expressed. You imply that their services were of a character which led you to infer that they were satisfied with the sermon. Is this true? Is it a just and candid account of the services of those gentlemen? They did not distinctly and directly remonstrate against the sermon, but can you, as an honest man, deny that almost every thought presented by them was in direct opposition to some of the sentiments of the sermon? and was it fair, in a public communication upon the subject, to conceal this important fact? Did not Dr. Pierce, in his prayer, with great distinctness, and in strong contrast with the sermon which had just preceded, express great reverence for the Holy Scriptures, for Jesus Christ, as the Mediator of the new covenant, sent to speak *with authority* to men? Did not the charge earnestly exhort the young candidate to reverence the character, example and authority of Jesus Christ, to go to his words as the source and the authority of the instructions he communicated to his people, to be careful to preach his gospel and not his own notions and passions? Could any one present believe, did you yourself really believe, that the persons who expressed the sentiments that were expressed in the prayer and in the charge, did approve, or could approve of some that were advanced in the sermon? I am satisfied that the opposite impression must have been conveyed by their services; I know that such impression was conveyed to many, and I feel aggrieved, I think Dr. Pierce and myself, as we are singled out from those who performed the other services, have both occasion to feel aggrieved, that in giving to the public an account of the occasion, you should have so represented the matter as to lead the public to infer that our services implied a concurrence in the sentiments of the sermon, which I contend was far from being the case. Though the language used in your letter, therefore, and quoted above, is literally true, inasmuch as we did not re-

monstrate, in direct express words, yet it is calculated to give, and does give the public a false impression respecting our services, and as such is not just or candid. It is a violation of the golden rule of doing to others as you would have others do to you. If it was through inadvertence your letter was so written as to convey this false impression, as I am ready to believe it was, I have no doubt that you will be disposed publicly to acknowledge and correct it. As an act of justice, I call upon you to do so, or to disprove what I have said respecting the character of the ordaining prayer and the charge.

One word more. You ask if the members of the Council "acknowledge Mr. Parker as a Christian minister?" This inquiry and form of expression is an implied acknowledgment on your part, that the *members of the Council are themselves Christian ministers*. An acknowledgment which the Orthodox clergy have not been very ready to make.

May I ask if you intended to make this acknowledgment, or are disposed to make it? Are you ready to recognize myself or any other members of that Council, as Christian ministers, and extend towards us ministerial courtesy and fellowship?

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. K. LOTHROP.

Boston, June 17, 1841.

To the above letter, Mr. Fairchild replied through the same paper of June 26th:—

TO THE REV. S. K. LOTHROP:

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter addressed to me in the *Courier* of the 18th inst., seems to require an answer. Christian courtesy, as well as the importance of the subject, demands it. And in answering it, my sincere wish is that the spirit of kindness and truth may dwell in my heart, and guide my pen.

You have chosen to single me out from the two other clergymen whose names are appended with mine to the synopsis of Mr. Parker's sermon. Your reason for not addressing us in our associated capacity, I am unable to explain. To this, however, I do not object. And if any other member of the Council should address a similar letter to my companions individually, I doubt not they would very readily return an answer, and be able, each one, to defend and justify himself.

Before I proceed to state my motives in making public the communication of which you complain, it seems necessary that the correctness of that communication should be established; for

if I have borne false witness, my motives, whatever they may have been, can hardly be pleaded in my justification. Though I profess to have a creed, yet it is no part of that creed "to do evil that good may come."

I was hoping that you spoke by authority, when I read in your letter that "the sermon itself is soon to be published, entire, and just as it was preached." In this, however, I am disappointed. The discourse is not the same, even by the admission of the author himself. He says in his preface, "I have made a few verbal alterations, changed the order of a few sentences, omitted here and there a few words which were only repetitions of former sentences, and added a few paragraphs which, though written in the manuscript, were necessarily omitted in consequence of the length of the discourse." Now, let me ask, is this fair, honest, just? Is *this* publishing the sermon "entire, and just as it was preached," as you assured me would be done? I appeal to your candor, to your sense of justice, was it right, after what had transpired in reference to that sermon, for the author "to make verbal alterations, change the order of sentences, omit words, and add paragraphs?" Was it not incumbent on him, as an honest man, and did he not owe it to the public, to publish the sermon, if he published it at all, just as it was preached, word for word, sentence for sentence, paragraph for paragraph? What need was there for these alterations? Ought not literary elegance and taste to be sacrificed on such an occasion, (especially by one whose literary character is already established,) rather than lose the advantage of the public assurance which you gave, that we should have the whole sermon "entire, and just as it was preached." But this has not been done. I shall, therefore, in my reply to your letter, proceed on the ground that our report of the sermon is correct. Indeed, this is admitted by Mr. Folsom, a member of the Council. He says explicitly, that the sermon was regarded by him and others as "deistical," and was "another gospel from what Paul preached." He says further, that our report of the sermon is, "in substance," correct. Dr. Pierce also has said to some of his friends in Boston, that we did not misrepresent the sentiments of the preacher, and that there was one sentence in the sermon, omitted by us, which he considered more objectionable than any which we reported. You probably recollect the sentence. It was uttered in words like these: "The story of the miraculous conception of Christ"—the remainder of the sentence we did not recollect with sufficient verbal accuracy to justify us in reporting it. Dr. Pierce is my authority for stating

the close of the sentence thus — “is worthy only to be placed by the side of the amours of Neptune.”

Am I to be told, because no mention is made of it in the printed sermon, that the preacher did not say — “We want no one to stand between us and God — no intervening Mediator?” Before I can be convicted of misrepresentation here, it must first be proved that I was not present on that occasion.

In our report, we represent the preacher as saying, “Christianity was the same nineteen centuries before Christ, as nineteen centuries after Christ.” Now just turn to the 39th page of the printed sermon, and read the following sentence: “The truth be brought to light must have been always the same before the eyes of all-seeing God, nineteen centuries before Christ, or nineteen centuries after him.” This is true; and had it been so delivered from the pulpit, the sentence above stated would not have appeared in our report. Now, whether this be a mere verbal alteration or changing the order of a sentence, without affecting the sense, you and the public may judge.

But I will not dwell longer on this painful subject. I will only add that there is no want of testimony the most unimpeachable, that the public have not the sermon in print as it was preached in the pulpit. There is, however, enough in the sermon as it now is, if I may be permitted to give your own description of it, “to undermine the very foundation of all Christian faith;” enough which is “at variance with Christian truth.”

Now for my motives. And you shall have them without concealment, and without equivocation. And first of all, I say that my motive was not what you seem to apprehend it to have been. Neither was it what a writer in the *Christian Register* insinuates — “to increase sectarian capital.” How was it possible for such a motive to influence me and my companions, when we were not only present ourselves, but publicly invited our people to be present? The inference would rather seem to be that we were disposed to give them an opportunity “to increase sectarian capital” from among our own people.

When we expressed the hope that in your charge, you would have remonstrated against the sentiments of the sermon, and were disappointed, I can truly say, for myself, that I had no design to make the impression on the public mind, that nothing was uttered in that charge in opposition to the sentiments of the preacher. There were things said by Dr. Pierce, in the consecrating prayer, and by yourself, in the charge, and especially by Mr. Putnam, in his address to the people, which could not fail to convince every hearer that you did not approve of some of

the sentiments proclaimed in the sermon. If I have been the occasion of making a different impression on the public mind, and thereby injuring you or any of your brethren, I am sincerely sorry for it. And I hope that this declaration will satisfy you and all concerned.

That you may get at my real motives, I will briefly state to you the circumstances of the case. A special invitation was given me to attend that ordination. Being acquainted with several members of that Society, for whom I have a high regard, as my neighbors and friends, I readily accepted the invitation. I had heard, on some former occasions, three or four sermons preached by Unitarian clergymen, in which nothing exceptionable was advanced; and I expected it would be so on that occasion. Judge then of my utter astonishment, when such sentiments were proclaimed in my hearing, by a professedly Christian minister! Believing that the members of a Council are responsible for what they do, and especially the one who offers the consecrating prayer, I felt as though Dr. Pierce would certainly arise, as soon as the sermon was ended, and publicly protest against such sentiments, and not proceed till he had first ascertained, from the candidate for ordination, that such were not *his* sentiments. As he failed to do this, I then expected it of you. But you ask, in your letter — “was I bound, or had I a right to interrupt the service by a remonstrance?” You certainly had a right to interrupt the services, so far as to say that you would not take the responsibility of aiding in ordaining a man, without previously ascertaining whether he were a deist or not. But you say that you have no creed. Of course, you do not examine a candidate for the ministry, as to his religious belief. How then, my dear sir, did you know that you were not about to assist in setting over that people, as their religious teacher, a deist? It is, I believe, the usual custom for the candidate to select his own preacher, and to make the selection, because he has confidence in him, and accords with him in sentiment. Was it, then, an unreasonable presumption that the views of the candidate were in harmony with those of the preacher? It seems to me that this was an extraordinary occasion, demanding a departure from the usual course of procedure. The question then presented was not one concerning creeds, or slight differences of opinion among believers in Christ; but this was the question — *Christianity or Infidelity; Bible or no Bible.*

It has ever been my impression, that all, who make any pretension to the Christian name, allow the divine authority and

inspiration of the scriptures ; and when that authority and inspiration were denied by the preacher, you cannot blame me for expressing disappointment in not hearing you remonstrate, even though you might thereby interrupt the services. And good people, of every Christian name, would, in my opinion, have approved the act, and sustained you in it. It seemed to me, that a remonstrance was as much demanded, as if the preacher had been laboring, through the whole of the sermon, to prove that there is no God. Therefore, in publishing the paper, of which you complain, I wished to know, and to have the public know, whether “ the Unitarian clergymen, of Boston and vicinity, so far sympathize with the preacher, in his opinions, as expressed on that occasion,” as knowingly to unite with deists, in ordaining men to the work of the Christian ministry. And, as you have no creed, and as no one of your number is authorized to speak for another, how could this knowledge be obtained, except by giving each one an opportunity to speak for himself?

You, sir, have spoken ; and while I am happy to read in your letter this sentence — “ I most seriously and solemnly protest against the sentiments advanced by Mr. Parker ” — yet I am somewhat disappointed at not finding a protest equally serious and solemn against uniting with a council in ordaining a man of such sentiments, and against giving him the right hand of fellowship as a Christian minister. Not that you actually ordained a man of such sentiments on that occasion. For aught I know, he may differ as widely from the preacher as yourself. But if this were the fact, how you became assured of it you can best explain. You indeed say, “ if Mr. Parker can find a people willing to hear him, and ministers willing to exchange with him, that is his affair and their affair, and not mine.” But you do not say that you would not, if requested, consecrate him by prayer, or give the charge, or express the fellowship of the churches. While I would have such a man and such a people enjoy all the rights of civil and religious liberty, without the infliction of pains and penalties for so doing, yet it would have been gratifying to have found in your letter a declaration that you will do nothing which has even the appearance of “ bidding them God speed,” or of countenancing their errors. Am I to understand that, in your opinion, a member of an ecclesiastical council assumes no responsibility when he assists in ordaining a man over a Christian people? And if he be a Deist, or even an Atheist, would you simply say, “ that is his affair, and their affair, and not mine ? ” While you plainly intimate that it is your determination to exclude such a man from your own pul-

pit, yet you do not say that you would not aid in introducing him into other pulpits.

I feel it due to Dr. Pierce, in this connexion, to say that he assured me he was taken by surprise, and gave me distinctly to understand that, had he had more time for reflection, he would have protested against the sentiments advanced, and publicly demanded whether the deism of the preacher was the deism of the candidate.

There is one sentence in your letter which both surprised and grieved me. After protesting most seriously and solemnly against the sentiments of Mr. Parker, "as undermining the very foundation of all Christian faith, and at variance with Christian truth," you add, "as much so, in my judgment, as some of the sentiments and doctrines which you yourself entertain and preach." By what authority, my dear sir, do you make this public insinuation that I entertain sentiments and preach doctrines tending "as much to undermine the very foundation of all Christian faith," as do the sentiments of Mr. Parker? This, to say the least, has the *appearance* of severity, and a want of Christian candor. The sentiments and doctrines which I profess to entertain and preach, are, in substance, the sentiments and doctrines entertained and preached by such men as Baxter, and Flavel, and Doddridge, and the early fathers of New England. And if you will place the sentiments and doctrines of these men on a level with those of Mr. Parker, on you be the responsibility. It would indeed be interesting to know whether you do really believe, as one might fairly infer, that Mr. Parker's deism is no worse than my orthodoxy. You further say, "if I entertained some of the opinions which I understood Mr. Parker to present, I should think that I ought to leave the Christian pulpit; that it was no longer a place in which I ought to stand as a professed Christian teacher." Then it seems that, as I entertain sentiments and preach doctrines which, in your opinion, tend as much as those of Mr. Parker, "to undermine the very foundation of all Christian faith," I ought, on that account, to leave the Christian pulpit. If this be your opinion of *my* duty, of course it is your opinion of the duty of all who entertain sentiments and preach doctrines in harmony with my own. And shall I do you any injustice when I infer that, as you would exclude *Mr. Parker* from your pulpit, on account of his sentiments, so, if I, or my orthodox brethren were to solicit an exchange with you, *we* should be excluded for a similar reason?

But why exclude Mr. Parker? Is he not one of your num-

ber, and in regular standing? Has he not received from you and your brethren the right hand of fellowship? With *us*, this ceremony has a meaning; and among other things, we mean by it to pledge ourselves to stand by a brother in time of trouble, and give him our sympathy and assistance, till he is proved guilty of something which will justify us in ceasing to acknowledge him as a Christian minister. It may be that Mr. Parker now feels that he is in trouble, and would be grateful for your sympathy and assistance. And yet, while he claims the fellowship promised him, and which you do not say he has forfeited, you in effect tell him that he is not fit to stand up in your pulpit. This, however, is his affair and your affair, and not mine.

In the paper which you say has aggrieved you, the question was asked, whether the clergymen who composed that council, acknowledge Mr. Parker as a Christian minister? Instead of answering this question, you inquire whether I will acknowledge you as a Christian minister? Now it seems to me that my question is, to say the least, quite as pertinent as yours, and vastly more important; and as it was proposed first, pray tell me why it should not be answered first? Besides, this is not a *personal* matter. We are now occupying ground infinitely higher; and we will not descend from it, with my consent, to engage in sectarian strife and personal conflict. What though I should say that I do or do not deem you a Christian minister? and what though you should say that you do or do not deem me a Christian minister? I and my brethren call ourselves Christian ministers; you and your brethren call yourselves Christian ministers. Do you consider Mr. Parker as one of your number? This is a question, and the *only* question, which seems now to claim attention. And in thus limiting the question, we cause it to stand out prominently, as a matter interesting, not to you and me *especially*, but to the whole Christian community. The public wish to know, not what you and I think of each other—that is an affair of trifling moment with them—but they wish to know whether deists are recognized by you and your brethren, as Christian ministers. This is the question which the Editor of the *Courier* asks with so much pertinency and force. He says—"It seems to me that there is a duty for the Unitarian clergy to perform; and that is, to say distinctly *yes* or *no* to the question, *Is a preacher of such sentiments a Christian minister?* They claim to be Christian ministers. *Is he one of them?*"

You complain of being aggrieved. I trust that enough has

been said already to satisfy you that it was not done designedly. You do not know me, if you suppose that I would wantonly wound your feelings or those of your brethren. So far as I am acquainted with the Unitarian clergymen of Boston and vicinity, I respect and love them. And even towards Mr. Parker himself, I am not conscious of having in my bosom one particle of enmity or ill-will. I am informed that he is a kind, amiable, obliging gentleman, and of unblemished moral character ; and I have no reason to doubt it. I admire his scholarship, his literary acquirements, and his talents, perverted though I deem them to be.

As something was said in the paper which gave rise to your letter, designed, it may be thought, to grieve the laymen who attend on the Unitarian ministry, allow me here to say one word in order to remove any unfavorable impression which may have been made upon their minds. When we spoke in that paper of "sitting under that instruction which causeth to err from the words of knowledge," we did not mean even to insinuate that our friends would countenance deism in the pulpit or out of it. And if a contrary impression has been made, I trust that what has now been said will remove it. For myself, I can truly say, that nothing could induce me needlessly to wound their feelings. Gratitude alone, if no higher principle, would forbid it. In a time of sickness and family embarrassment, as well as on other occasions, I have received from these friends many testimonies of kindness and affection, (especially from one of your own parishioners,) for which I feel truly grateful, and shall feel so till I die. But these friends, I am sure, now that they know my motives, will not be wounded, unless it be the wound which they feel in common with me, that such sentiments should have been proclaimed from the pulpit. They feel, I am sure, such an attachment for the Bible, as the inspired book of God, such need of its hopes and consolations, and such a dread of destroying its restraints on the public mind, that they will thank me for exposing deism whenever and wherever advocated, and for defending Christianity whenever and wherever assailed. They will not subscribe to the doctrine that the Bible is not the standard of truth.

I wish to say, in conclusion, that I have no taste for controversy of any kind. My habits and feelings are altogether averse to it. Nor are my views and feelings sectarian. Christians of every name, who hold Christ the head, and receive the Bible as the inspired word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice, have my fellowship and good wishes. Though I may

differ from them on certain points of doctrine, yet that circumstance produces in my mind no distrust—no alienation. And in the matter before us, I am not contending for the peculiarities of one Christian sect more than another. I stand on common ground, and plead in defence of our common Christianity. And I cannot believe that Christians of any sect or name will censure me for what I have done. I may further add; that nothing but a conscientious conviction of duty to the cause of truth and righteousness could have prevailed on me to unite with my two brothers of the Baptist and Methodist denominations, in making public the deistical sentiments advanced on that occasion. If I have erred in this matter, it is some consolation to know that it is an error of the head, and not of the heart. Affectionately yours,

J. H. FAIRCHILD.

Boston, June 25, 1841.

The following communication appeared in the 'Courier' of June 29th:

ORDINATION AT SOUTH BOSTON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER:

I was absent from town when this ordination took place, and also when the letter and statement, signed by the Rev. Mr. Fairchild and others, were published. The letter of the Rev. Mr. Lothrop first called my attention to the subject. Having seen abundant evidence of the injustice and illiberality of self-styled Orthodox clergymen and laymen, towards Unitarians, I saw little to regret in the remarks of Mr. Lothrop. I next read Mr. Parker's sermon, and then the statement referred to. Notwithstanding all I had heard and known of transcendentalism, (for I must use this word in its well-known sense) I was shocked and grieved at the sentiments of the preacher. The statement struck me as prepared with great care and in a good spirit, and, making allowances for the verbal alterations admitted to have been made in the printed copy, as singularly accurate and fair.

I regretted that Mr. Lothrop had from any cause been led to suspect the motives of the writers, when those of the highest and purest character seemed sufficient to account for the measure they adopted.

My own impression was, that had I been a member of the Council, I should have risen in my place when the preacher closed, and proposed an adjournment, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or no the candidate assented to the opinions and sentiments he avowed. As no member did this, it may be that in such an emergency no one would be prepared to act promptly,

and therefore I would blame no one for the omission. Such a course cannot be called unjust toward a candidate. It is known that in former times, it was usual for him to be the preacher on these occasions, and now that he selects a substitute, it is surely reasonable to presume that he and his representative agree in what they deem the fundamentals of religion.

I, for one, feel indebted to Mr. Fairchild and his associates for the call they made. What may possibly be its effects, for a time, on Unitarianism, is of no consequence. If our principles cannot stand this test, or the denunciations of the very consistent editor of the *Boston Quarterly*, or any and all other tests, let them go down. I go for Christianity as I find it in the Bible. I cannot be satisfied that man is inherently a Christian, or that without the aid of that blessed book, or some other Revelation that God may hereafter see fit to make, he would ever become one.

I would sooner see every Unitarian congregation in our land dissolved, and every one of their churches occupied by other denominations, or razed to the ground, than assist in placing a man, entertaining the sentiments of Mr. Parker, in one of their pulpits.

Mr. Lothrop's allusion to sentiments expressed by two other gentlemen who took part in the services, I regard as illustrative of a general principle, and not requiring explanation. One of the gentlemen has thought otherwise, and, according to my apprehension, his remarks published in your paper lead to the inference that he differed little from the preacher.

The letter of Mr. Fairchild to Mr. Lothrop, in your paper of Saturday, increases my respect for his character. With him, I regret that Mr. Parker made a single alteration in printing his sermon. The occurrence reminds me of one that I hope may not be found too apposite to this occasion.

A clergyman, rather noted for the laxity of his opinions, had preached to an audience in the Old Colony, composed of different denominations, much to the delight of all, which a gentleman present took occasion to say to him. He replied, "well, that is very singular, for I preached the same discourse at two churches in Boston, and a parcel of half-thinking people went home and said I was a deist." On which he was asked if he meant to say that the sermon was, in truth, precisely the same, unaltered. "Yes," said he, "except that here and there I have interposed a guard or two." To this the querist rejoined — "I, sir, was one of the half-thinking people you referred to. I then

thought the sentiments highly reprehensible, but with a guard here and there, they meet my entire approbation."

A CHRISTIAN LAYMAN.

In reply to the above, we copy the following article from the same paper:—

BOSTON, *June 29, 1841.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER :

In the letter of your correspondent, "A Christian Layman," in the *Courier* of this morning, — so just in its views of the subject of which it treats, and candid in its treatment of the Rev. Mr. Fairchild, and the clerical brethren united with him, — there was only a single sentence which I read with pain.

He says — "Having seen abundant evidence of the injustice and illiberality of self-styled Orthodox clergymen and laymen, towards Unitarians, I saw little to regret in the remarks of Mr. Lothrop."

As I have often been pained, since I have had the privilege of preaching the gospel in this community, with expressions of this kind, and have probably shared this pain with many others, it has seemed to me that it might be well, now that the attention of my fellow-citizens is awakened to our religious relations to each other, to ask of you and them, a few moments' attention to the charges implied, I have no doubt conscientiously, in the words just cited.

Your correspondent writes of those who are "self-styled Orthodox clergymen and laymen."

Without professing to be possessed of much accurate information on this subject, permit me to state what has appeared to me to be the truth, in regard to such terms; and what will probably be found to be the truth, after the closest scrutiny.

They, who are called "Orthodox," have not obtained the title by any self-complacent assumption of it, but by silent conventional agreement. They compose that class of our fellow-citizens, who hold, substantially, to those principles of religious truth, which were believed in, and loved, and defended, by the Fathers of New England. They have never shrunk from avowing those principles, in written words, (creeds, if any one desires so to call them,) with as much honesty and willingness as the votaries of any great truths in human governments have ever avowed their political principles.

It was quite natural, in such circumstances, that they who thus walked in the "old ways" of their fathers should be called "Orthodox." That term has accordingly been applied to them;

and as they have believed, and do believe, that in their religious doctrines they are substantially correct, they have been willing to acquiesce in the propriety of the title, — although perfectly aware for many years past, that, instead of being an appellation which has helped them, it has been often adroitly applied as a term of reproach. Although thus used to their disadvantage, they have not, and they do not disclaim it. But they have not sought, and they do not seek it. I think that your correspondent, — fair as his letter certainly is, in other respects, — must, on reflection, see that he is wrong in affirming that they “are self-styled orthodox.”

The second charge implied in the sentence I cited is, that “the Orthodox” have treated Unitarians with “injustice and illiberality.”

Without meaning to affirm, that in the heat of controversy, respecting truths which they believed to be inspired by God, for the eternal good of his accountable creatures, orthodox men have never been apparently bigoted, or have never been betrayed, for a time, into an unkind spirit, — I beg leave to record it, as a conviction which, I think, can be substantiated by undeniable facts, that their general course of feeling and action towards Unitarians, has not been, and is not, one either of “injustice or illiberality.”

At the commencement of what may be called the Unitarian controversy in Massachusetts, they saw, or thought they saw, the beginning of a course of things which would, eventually, produce a crisis like to that at which we have now arrived. And, without any desire to infringe upon the free exercise of religious liberty, they felt bound to declare their convictions, that they would no longer go with those, the end of whose religious doctrines they firmly believed would be the overthrow of the faith of the Pilgrim Fathers ; — the faith for which those fathers so courageously endured all that their history shows them to have suffered, and the faith which they believed to be clearly revealed in the word of God.

They not only believed, but declared, that the result of the religious doctrines they opposed would be an ultimate abandonment of the Bible as the inspired word of God, and at least an approach to avowed infidelity.

Believing thus, they honestly declared that they could hold no public fellowship with those from whom they differed, and by their actions would never profess to think and feel in a way, which their conscience and their heart belied. This they declare to-day ; and they are now ready, kindly, and not taunt-

ingly, to point their fellow-citizens to the developement, in acknowledged facts, of the truth of their past predictions.

In this, surely, no candid man will say, that there is either "injustice or illiberality."

Permit me only to add, that in assuming the ground which has thus separated them from Unitarians, "the Orthodox" of Massachusetts cannot justly be said to have sought for themselves either temporal power or reputation. By the course they have pursued, they have been hitherto subjected to the honest displeasure and opposition of many of the most influential and talented laymen of our city and State, who could not be reasonably supposed, from their position, to see the dangers which seemed evident to them. While in other forms, which I will not now attempt to mention, they have encountered difficulties, which by a less firm adherence to their fundamental principles, they might have easily avoided.

I trust, sir, to your known candor and liberality, to give these few suggestions a place in your columns. A PASTOR.

We cut the following piece from the 'Puritan' of July 1st. It will be remembered that Mr. Sargent presented the Right Hand of Fellowship to Mr. Shackford.

The editor of the Courier deserves the thanks of the community, that he has had the firmness to pursue an impartial course respecting the subject of Mr. Parker's sermon. It was natural for him, as a Unitarian, to feel a sense of mortification, in view of recent developements. But he has not shrunk from exposing the false positions of his friends. His reply to a suggestion in Mr. Sargent's right hand of fellowship, is to the point. Mr. Sargent said :

"We are never frightened by the progress of those who truly 'wait upon the Lord.' We allow them to 'renew their strength,' by whatsoever courses or different modes of intellectual exercise, and while they 'mount up with wings as eagles,' we bid them prosper and go forward for ever, so long as they fly towards the sun, — the 'Sun of Righteousness,' and keep within the range of his beams."

The editor of the Courier, in a note referring to this extract, says:

"We ought, perhaps, to ask the pardon of the writer for interposing a remark; but it appears to us, that this saving clause — '*so long* as they fly toward the sun — the Sun of Righteousness — and keep within the range of his beams,'

involves the whole matter in controversy. The question which the Unitarian laymen ask to have answered is, substantially, — ‘Do the Unitarian clergy hold that the preacher of the ordination sermon flies toward the Sun of Righteousness? Is he within the range of that Sun’s beams?’ If the sermon has been truly represented, we — the laity — think that his course is towards a *luminary* of a very different character, and that so far from being within the range of those glorious beams, he is wandering by the light of a baleful blaze, that emanates from an *antagonist* source.”

In the same paper of June 24th, we find the following editorial article :

UNITARIAN FELLOWSHIP.

Providence has suffered a practical test to be applied to the Unitarian theory of Christian fellowship. That theory has been, that the Christian name must be accorded to all who profess to be Christians, and that it is an infringement on the right of private judgment, to disown fellowship with any one, whatever may be his principles. The intrinsic absurdity of this is now coming out, so that every eye can see it. A Unitarian minister of high literary standing, and having many admirers, has come out with the most positive declaration, of what his brethren confess to be *deism*. Yet his claim to the continuance of fellowship with other Unitarian ministers, on their principles, is indisputable. It would be (according to them) an act of violence to his right of private judgment, his liberty of conscience, to say that they could have no fellowship with his sentiments, nor with him, while holding them.

He has in the most public manner declared his infidelity, and poured ridicule upon the Christian Scriptures. And it is preposterous that he should be longer regarded as a fit teacher of Christianity, and an expounder of the Scriptures. No matter; if it be wrong to excommunicate any one, he has a right, an indisputable claim to the fellowship of Unitarians. Besides, though this minister is confessed by his brethren to be a deist, he still claims to be regarded as a Christian. He avers his belief in the Christian Scriptures, while he unblushingly contradicts them, and holds them as fit objects of his contempt. And as for belief in Christ, he excels his brethren even in that. They believe in only one Christ; and he believes in forty Christs already come, and in an indefinite number of Christs yet to come. Yea, according to his own principles, he is a Christ

himself. And if he claims on such grounds to be a Christian, must they not receive him, and give him the right hand of fellowship, and thus declare to the world that an Infidel is a Christian?—that Infidelity is Christianity, and cheerfully celebrate the union between Christ and Belial, between him that believeth and an Infidel? Yes, there is no evasion of this result on Unitarian principles, and we have reason to know, that the Unitarian ministers of this vicinity, now feel the embarrassment of this position. An absurd principle was very convenient for some purposes, so long as they had no occasion to act upon it, and bring it to a practical test. But now that one of their number has unblushingly avowed Infidel principles, and still claims their fellowship, which by their own principles they can for no cause withhold, they are brought into a dilemma. And how do they expect to escape? By a silent and informal withdrawal from their Infidel brother? If they were inclined to this, and he were consenting to it, it might be the best method of extrication which their principles and circumstances allow. But here they are shut up. He has no fancy for being set aside thus. Though he preaches in their pulpits as rank Infidelity as was ever uttered, and though they cannot deny it, yet he calls it persecution to insinuate he is an Infidel. What! is he who believes in forty Christs, and who finds Christs even among heathen philosophers—is he to be put down as no Christian? No, he will hold them to their terms, and grasp the right hand of their fellowship with a heartier grip, in proportion to their greater need to shake him off.

Nor do we know that they have any inclination to set him aside, if they could in consistency with their principles of fellowship. We know that their exigencies require it. But we have some reason to think, that their inward feeling of fellowship towards him is undiminished. For since the recent publication of his Infidelity, (confessed by them to be deism,) they have gone in a body and sat under his preaching, while he was sustaining in his turn, a service in which the Unitarian ministers in this vicinity are wont to unite, as if they were determined to gather around him, and sustain him. The question was publicly propounded to them, through no less than three papers at once, whether they sympathized with such sentiments, and were prepared to uphold such a man? And now they have given their unqualified yea and amen, by a united public act. Whether this has been done *ex animo*, or as a matter of policy, it is not for us to say. Though it would seem that men whose sense of the importance of Christian truth is not strong enough to hold them

aloof from the embrace of Infidels, gave good grounds for the suspicion that they themselves are Infidels at heart. The proverb "birds of a feather," &c., is not wholly obsolete.

But we will not reason on the basis of any such suspicion. We will suppose that our neighbors, while they are shocked by the sentiments of their brother, still feel, by their principles, bound not to disown him. Then we conclude, that they expect to escape responsibility, on the ground that they have been always principled against disowning any one. When the question arises, "if the Unitarian ministers regard this man as an Infidel, why do n't they declare their conviction, and wash their hands of him?" they expect to have it answered for them that "they do not disown any one. Every one stands or falls by his own principles. Every one has the rights of conscience, and is answerable only to God for their use." Whatever may be their sympathy or want of sympathy with this man's Infidel principles, this is the ground on which we suppose they intend to stand before the public.

But it will give them trouble to hold this ground. The ground itself is so at war with common sense, that in spite of themselves, they will be held responsible for the Infidelity of those to whom they give the right hand of fellowship. Their connexion with this man is such as *by necessity* gives their countenance to his errors. They treat him before the public as a Christian minister, and virtually say that his preaching is, for substance, Christian truth. They therefore give him the most efficient aid in propagating Infidelity. In the eye of common sense, their continuance of fellowship is their endorsement of his doctrines. It is their aid of him in convincing the old and young, and all that come under his influence, that Infidelity is truth. And have they no responsibility in such a case?

But no, you will say, "our declared principles of Christian union are tantamount to a protest against such an inference, from the fact of our fellowship." As well might you say, if you were preaching Infidelity by your own pens and mouths, "you have no right to infer that I countenance and encourage this Infidelity which I preach." For it is as much a law of common sense, that a man holds in heart the views which he holds *in fellowship*, as that he holds in heart those which he *preaches*. And no protest can annul that law.

Besides, this supposed practical protest is balanced by another practical protest. If you were to take the ground which such a pretence would naturally lead to, and say, that as soon as a man publicly declares, or manifests his Infidelity, our fellowship with

him from that moment ceases *de facto*, though we never in form excommunicate any one, there would be more plausibility in the plea. But the difficulty is, your fellowship does not cease *de facto*. *Your acts of fellowship* continue, in spite of the most offensive declarations of Infidelity. You say that you stand on such grounds, that as soon as a man becomes an open Infidel, he is no longer of you; that you have no need to excommunicate him; the public having the evidence of his Infidelity, are bound to see that he is not a Christian, and not of your fellowship. Nay, but you will not let them. You hold him still in *actual* fellowship — you come again and sit under his preaching — you admit him to your clerical circles as a brother beloved, and treat him still as a Christian minister. And thus you give a practical protest against any practical disownment, which your known views of fellowship might operate. There is indeed no evasion of responsibility. You have in your fellowship a man who is an Infidel, as zealous, as bold, as avowed, and as deeply hostile to Christianity, as David Hume or Edward Gibbon. And you know it, and confess it; and you will not give him up. And yet you think you are giving no countenance to Infidelity. Be astonished, O heavens, at this!! Believe it, **THE CRISIS HAS COME.** The confession has gone out from your own brotherhood, that an Infidel is in your fellowship; and disown him you must, or be yourself disowned as Infidels, by men of sense and conscience among your own people. We have no exalted opinion of what is called Unitarian Christianity, especially since it has been going to seed, and showing what seed it produces. But there is moral worth and integrity in Unitarian congregations, which if much longer insulted in this manner, will choose its own way of dissolving the ties that would fasten the reproach of Infidelity upon it.

To this we add the following editorial from the ‘Boston Recorder’ of June 25th :

MR. PARKER'S SERMON.

The sermon of Mr. Parker, at the ordination of Mr. Shackford, at South Boston, has at length come before the public. We have given it an attentive perusal; and we do not think that the sketch given under the signature of several clergymen who were present at its delivery, does the sentiments of the author any injustice, though his ideas are clothed in such a tinged livery of transcendentalism that it is no easy matter always to know what he would be at. We give the following paragraph how-

ever, as a specimen of the manner in which he treats the Sacred Scriptures.

“ On the authority of the written Word, man was taught to believe impossible legends, conflicting assertions ; to take fiction for fact ; a dream for a miraculous revelation of God ; an oriental poem for a grave history of miraculous events ; a collection of amatory idyls for a serious discourse ‘ touching the mutual love of Christ and the Church ;’ they have been taught to accept a picture sketched by some glowing eastern imagination, never intended to be taken for a reality, as a proof that the Infinite God spoke in human words, appeared in the shape of a cloud, a flaming bush, or a man who eat and drank, and vanished into smoke ; that he gave counsels to-day, and the opposite to-morrow ; that he violated his own laws, was angry, and was only dissuaded by a mortal man from destroying at once a whole nation — millions of men who rebelled against their leader in a moment of anguish. Questions in philosophy, questions in the Christian religion, have been settled by an appeal to that book. The inspiration of its authors has been assumed as infallible. Every fact in the early Jewish history, has been taken as a type of some analogous fact in Christian history. The most distant events, even such as are still in the arms of time, were supposed to be clearly foreseen and foretold by pious Hebrews several centuries before Christ. It has been assumed at the outset, with no shadow of evidence, that those writers held a miraculous communication with God, such as he has granted to no other man. What was originally a presumption of bigoted Jews became an article of faith, which Christians were burned for not believing. This has been for centuries the general opinion of the Christian church, both Catholic and Protestant, though the former never accepted the Bible as the *only* source of religious truth. It has been so. Still worse, it is now the general opinion of religious sects at this day. Hence the attempt, which always fails, to reconcile the philosophy of our times with the poems in Genesis writ a thousand years before Christ ; hence the attempt to conceal the contradictions in the record itself. Matters have come to such a pass that even now, he is deemed an infidel, if not by implication an atheist, whose reverence for the Most High forbids him to believe that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, a thought at which the flesh creeps with horror ; to believe it solely on the authority of an oriental story, written down nobody knows when, or by whom, or for what purpose : which may be a poem, but cannot be the record of a fact, unless God is the author of confusion and a lie.”

“The history of opinions on the New Testament is quite similar. It has been assumed at the outset, it would seem with no sufficient reason, without the smallest pretence on its writer’s part, that all of its authors were infallibly and miraculously inspired, so that they could commit no error of doctrine or fact. Men have been bid to close their eyes at the obvious difference between Luke and John; the serious disagreement between Paul and Peter; to believe, on the smallest evidence, accounts which shock the moral sense and revolt the reason, and tend to place Jesus in the same series with Hercules, and Apollonius of Tyana; accounts which Paul in the Epistles never mentions, though he also had a vein of the miraculous running quite through him.”

Although we have no doubt this will startle many, as a new and specious development of infidelity, yet it is no more than Unitarian writers have all along been in the habit of asserting, in respect to the infallible inspiration of the Bible. But, we suppose whatever we or any other lovers of the word of God may say on this subject, will be answered in the pompous and inflated style of the author’s preface, in the closing paragraph of which he says:

“It is not necessary I should remark upon the article relating to this discourse, signed by several clergymen, and so industriously circulated by the religious journals. The thing speaks for itself. Others likewise, I find, have lifted up their heel against this discourse, or the rumor of it. I was not so vain as to expect my humble attempts to make a distinction between Religion and Theology, or to deliver Christianity from Heathen and Jewish notions — would be either acceptable or understood, by all; nor yet am I so young as to be surprised at the cry of ‘Infidel and Blasphemer,’ which has been successively raised against nearly all defenders of the Religion of Jesus, from Origen to Ralph Cudworth.”

In reply to the communication of Mr. Fairchild and his associates, it will be seen, Mr. Parker says his sermon *will speak for itself*. This would be well enough said, if the sermon were published *as it was delivered*; but, he admits above, that he has made alterations in several particulars, and he does not tell us precisely where or how much. If, then, on the comparison of the sermon with the statement made by these gentlemen, it should appear to be not so strong in its statements of the points objected to, it will be unfair to charge them with misrepresentation, till it be shown precisely what alterations have been made. We must express our surprise that a sermon published under

such circumstances *should be altered at all*. However, it is bad enough as it is; and we do not wonder that the author should be frightened at the shadows of his own creating, and shrink from exposing their horrid forms before the public gaze.

Mr. Lothrop's second letter to Mr. Fairchild :

TO THE REV. J. H. FAIRCHILD :

MY DEAR SIR, — I thank you for your letter of the 25th inst., in reply to mine of the 17th. I thank you for its courteous tone and spirit. The care and ability with which it is prepared need no commendation from me. I regret that you omitted to answer some of the questions I proposed. A newspaper correspondence is as disagreeable to me as it can be to you. The responsibility of this will rest with those whose original communication through the newspapers commenced it. It is not necessary perhaps, that our correspondence should be further continued; but you have dwelt so long upon some incidental circumstances connected with my letter, and the occasion which called it forth, that a few words of explanation and comment seem to be required of me.

I did not give, nor can I perceive that I said any thing in my letter which implied a *pledge* that Mr. Parker's sermon would or *should* be published without alteration. I merely said, "as the sermon is to be printed entire, and just as it was preached." This was a statement of a fact or expectation, founded on what I had heard from those on whose information I presumed I might rely — a misstatement, as the event proved, but not a pledge. No one could suppose, from the subsequent part of my letter, that I was especially in Mr. Parker's confidence, or spoke with authority from him. The publication of the sermon proved that the information upon which I made my statement was not correct, but not that I had violated a pledge, or given an assurance which Mr. Parker had failed to fulfil. All that portion of your letter, therefore, which relates to this point, and is occupied with holding me up before the public, as one who had failed to redeem a pledge, was, to give it no other epithet, wholly unnecessary.

The reason which induced me to address you individually, instead of all three of the clergymen whose names were appended to the original communication, would be sufficiently obvious, I presumed, from my letter itself. I had heard that you had been expressly assured, by one or two Unitarian clergymen, that the sentiments of Mr. Parker's sermon were not approved of by them, or by Unitarians generally. I had not heard that the

other two clergymen had been so assured. My letter, therefore, with obvious propriety, was addressed to yourself individually, to ask *you* whether *you* had been so assured, and if you had, why *you* made a public inquiry upon a subject in respect to which you had already been as well informed as you could expect to be. To the first of these questions you return no answer. You take no notice of it. To the second, you say that you "wished to know whether the Unitarian clergymen of Boston and vicinity so far sympathize with the preacher in his opinions, as expressed on that occasion, as knowingly to unite with deists, in ordaining men to the work of the Christian ministry." This was a perfectly pure motive, and honorable to yourself. I thank you for the explicitness with which you have stated it, and can only regret that such a simple "wish to know" was not accompanied with a wiser discernment of the best and most direct sources of information. One would have supposed that a simple "wish to know" whether Unitarians would knowingly unite with deists in ordaining men to the work of the Christian ministry, would have led you to make the inquiry through some of the established channels of communication with the denomination, such as the *Christian Register*, the *Monthly Miscellany*, edited by Rev. E. S. Gannett, or the *Christian Examiner*, edited by Rev. William Ware. This would seem to have been the most direct mode of obtaining satisfactorily the information you desired — certainly a more probable mode than to omit, as you did, sending your communication to either of these journals, while you published it simultaneously in two or three orthodox newspapers, which are seen but by a few Unitarians, while the great mass of their readers, ignorant as yourself, probably, in respect to the question at issue, would have been incapable of giving you the knowledge you sought.

Your motive, my dear sir, as stated in your letter, was pure and worthy ; but it may be a question, whether a simple "wish to know," though a perfectly pure motive and a natural curiosity, authorizes an individual, or two or three individuals, to become the public catechizers of a whole denomination, especially of a denomination to which they do not belong, and to whose members they refuse to extend Christian privileges and fellowship ? — whether it does not savor of arrogance and presumption in them to assume that position and office ? I have no disposition, however, to detract from the gratitude which may be felt toward you by any portion of the community, for exercising watch and guardianship over Unitarian churches and min-

isters. So far as it has been serviceable, I thank you for it myself. If you reverse the case, however, and suppose three Unitarian clergymen to have been invited to be present at an Orthodox ordination, and the preacher to have been very heretical or very orthodox in his sermon, to have startled by the latitude of his speculations, or offended by the strictures of his opinions, and the Unitarian clergy to have undertaken to determine the matter, and make a public demand of the members of the ordaining council "whether they sympathized with the views of the preacher," you will be better able to determine whether you would not deem it an appropriate answer to such a demand, to say, "We do not recognize your right or duty to institute an inquisition over us. The differences and difficulties in our own denomination we can settle among ourselves." Some few weeks since, when all Unitarians were described by one of your brethren, in a printed sermon, as doing greater injury and wrong to the Saviour than Judas who betrayed him, or the Jews who crucified him, or Saul who persecuted his disciples, I felt a strong "*wish to know*," whether all the Orthodox clergymen "of Boston and vicinity," sympathized with the sentiments and approved of the uncharitable comparisons of that sermon; but had I made a public demand to that effect, I doubt whether "each one" or any one of the Orthodox clergy would have improved the "opportunity to speak for himself," in reply to the demand.

You ask how we knew that we were not ordaining a deist? We had all the evidence an ordaining council commonly has in such a case. We knew that the candidate had studied divinity at an Orthodox theological school; that he had been approbated to preach by an association of Orthodox ministers; that he had been for two or three years a popular preacher; that he had been employed by all the religious societies of his native town, Portsmouth, associated and jointly contributing for that purpose, as a minister to the poor in that place; and that he had been for some months preaching to the religious society at South Boston, which had invited him to become their Christian teacher and pastor. With this evidence before them, the council certainly had good reason to suppose that the candidate was a Christian, and not a deist; and upon the strength of this evidence, they voted to proceed to ordain him. Whether after the sermon was delivered, this vote ought to have been reconsidered, or whether, without reconsidering it, any individual of the council ought to have insisted upon instituting a new inquiry into the qualifications of the candidate, or to have entered a remonstrance or protest against

further proceedings, is a nice and somewhat difficult question, the decision of which, either way, is accompanied with some embarrassment.

Had any member of the Council remonstrated and refused to proceed in the ordination services, it is highly probable that the indecorum would have appeared so great, that he would have been severely censured by some of the very persons, who now think he ought to have remonstrated. Such a remonstrance on the part of the whole Council, or of any member who had a service to perform, would have raised another question, which, if settled upon Congregational principles, would probably have ended in the Council taking the course they did, and proceeding with the ordination. To such a remonstrance, the candidate and the congregation over whom he was to be ordained, might very properly have replied, "You have already determined all the questions that appertain to the service you are to perform. You have inquired into the proceedings of the parish in relation to the call of the candidate, and found them to be regular and satisfactory to both parties. You have inquired into the qualifications of the candidate, and found that he has been regularly educated for the ministry, and approbated to preach the Gospel, and that he has been preaching with us for some months, to our satisfaction and edification, and have voted that you are satisfied upon these points, and are ready to proceed to his ordination, and we contend that nothing has occurred on our part that should affect, or require you to reconsider, that vote. We invited Mr. Parker and yourselves to aid us on this occasion, but we knew not what sentiments he would utter, any more than we know what sentiments will be uttered in the prayer, or the charge, or the fellowship, or the address, nor are we accountable for what has been or may be uttered. We contend that you have no reason to suppose that we approve of the sentiments of Mr. Parker, any more than you do yourselves, and therefore have no need or right to interrogate us. Mr. Parker is one of your body, and, in his service, has spoken as your organ as much as ours. As individuals, or as a body, proceed in relation to him as you deem fit: but in relation to ourselves, we contend that Christian courtesy requires you to proceed in and conclude the services you have on satisfactory ground voted to perform." To have replied to this reasoning would have been difficult. It is very easy, after an occasion has passed, for those who are dissatisfied to say how they would have acted. The Council may have done wrong in not remonstrating; but if so, it was under circumstances which might put at fault the wisest discretion, the most sound and comprehensive judgment.

Whether now, since the sermon has been published, and the position of Mr. Parker distinctly defined, I or any member of that Council would again unite with him in an ordination service, till the sentiments of that sermon were retracted or disavowed, or aid in introducing a man of similar sentiments into the pulpit, are different questions from the one you proposed. I contend that I answered fully and frankly the questions you proposed in your original communication, while you have refused to answer the questions I, in reply, proposed to you. You asked, "if the members of the Council sympathized in the sentiments of the preacher as expressed on that occasion, and recognized him as a Christian minister." I answered those questions. I said, I, for one, protested against the sentiments of the sermon, and that if I held them myself, I should not regard myself as a Christian minister. It follows, of course, as a necessary inference, that I do not regard any other man who holds them as a Christian minister, i. e. he is not one with whom I could have intimate sympathy and fellowship. Here was a frank and sufficiently explicit answer to your questions. I asked in reply, if you were willing to recognize me or the members of that Council as Christian ministers, and extend toward us ministerial courtesy and fellowship. This question you do not answer — because, as I understand you, I have not said "whether, if requested, I would consecrate by prayer, or give the charge or express the fellowship of the churches," to a man holding the sentiments expressed by Mr. Parker. You did not ask these questions in your original communication. When you have answered the question I proposed to you, I will answer these.

I am inclined to think, my dear sir, that we do not either of us occupy, in public estimation, the high grounds on which you think you stand, and from which you say you will not descend "to engage in sectarian strife and personal conflict." You descended from it, in my judgment, in the outset, in your original communication of the 28th May last. There is, indeed, a great public question of general interest at issue, a question not simply and exclusively between Mr. Parker and the Unitarian community, clergy and laity, but between Mr. Parker and all who reverence the Scriptures, as the records of a divine, supernaturally communicated revelation of truth and duty to man. But you were not willing to wait for the discussion of the question to come up in the natural and proper manner it would have done after the sermon had been published. You were not disposed to wait till Unitarians had the authority of words printed in black and white, rather than their own memories to depend upon, before they expressed their opinions or entered upon the discus-

sion of the sentiments advanced in Mr. Parker's sermon. Though it was generally understood that the sermon was in press, you chose to hasten and forestall the discussion of it, and give it a peculiar character and direction, by a public communication in the newspapers, proposing certain questions to the members of the ordaining council. In that communication you were *personal*. You enumerated some of the members of the Council. You made a personal attack upon myself. You called me by name, and publicly rebuked me for not remonstrating at the time against the sentiments of the sermon, expressing yourself disappointed that I did not do so. If this was not *personal*, I do not understand the signification of the word. I so considered it, and therefore replied to it. If my name had not been mentioned, or my conduct assailed in your communication, I should not have felt called upon to notice it. Being so mentioned and so assailed in the document to which your name was appended, I felt obliged to notice it, and did so, *personally*, under my own name, answering your questions so far as I was individually concerned, and then, assuming the liberty of which you had set me the example, I proposed certain questions to you *personally*. A reply to one of these questions, especially, you evade or decline, because, as I understand you, you will not descend from the high ground you occupy, "to engage in sectarian strife and personal conflict." Having been the first to make the descent, and engage in that conflict, and having forced me into it, I am at a loss to perceive the justness or propriety of your placing your refusal on this ground. There is a great public question, a subject of great public interest, brought forward by Mr. Parker's sermon, which must be discussed and determined. But we have not either of us, I presume, in what we have written, proposed to become the public champions and sole defenders of one or the other side of this question. I certainly have not; I leave that to abler hands. I have simply expressed my own opinions in answer to your questions. The matter *between us* is, in a measure, a *personal* matter. I mean not that it is, or need be, accompanied with any personal ill-will or unkind feeling. It certainly is not on my part. I feel perfectly kindly disposed towards yourself, and am ready to reciprocate whatever personal regard and respect, whatever Christian or ministerial sympathy and fellowship, you may be disposed to extend towards me. But when men write to each other in the newspapers, signing their names, there must be something personal between them. They are, at least, *personally* responsible to each other, and the public for the consistency and propriety of their course. Your position before the public, as I conceive it, is this: — The Orthodox por-

tion of the Congregationalists, have been for some years separated from the Unitarian portion of the Congregationalists, and have refused to recognize or have fellowship with them as Christians. You belong to the Orthodox Congregationalists. You either do or do not concur in the course they have pursued in relation to Unitarians. You either do or you do not regard Unitarians as Christians. If you do regard Unitarians as Christians, then you would be willing to receive them to your church ; to permit them to approach your communion table ; to baptize their children ; to receive them to your church by letters of dismissal and recommendation from Unitarian churches, without exacting from them a new profession of faith ; and occasionally, if circumstances made it convenient and desirable, to exchange with Unitarian ministers. If you so regard Unitarians, and have so treated them, or are ready so to treat them, then your questions, put forth in your communication of the 28th May, and subsequently repeated and enlarged in your letter to me of the 25th June, were pertinent. There was force and meaning in them. You had a right, you were justified in putting them. But if you do not regard Unitarians as Christians, if you are unwilling to receive them to your church, to extend toward them Christian privileges and fellowship, then you regard them as infidels, or deists, or whatever name you choose to give them. They are *not* Christians in your estimation. If you so regard Unitarians, if you have so treated them, and intend so to continue to treat them, then your inquiries, as put forth in your communication of the 28th of May, and subsequently repeated and enlarged in your letter to me of the 25th June, were not pertinent. They are without force or meaning. They amount to simply asking, whether infidels and deists sympathize with infidels and deists ; whether those who are not Christians, are ready to unite with those who are not Christians, in introducing men into the Christian ministry — questions which at least seem to carry an absurdity upon their face. This is the position in which you have placed yourself by your inquiries. If you choose to refuse to explain the consistency of this position, on the ground that you will not “ consent to engage in sectarian strife and personal conflict,” I am disposed to be satisfied.

I regret that one sentence in my letter has been entirely misunderstood by you ; I regret it the more, as you found a long argument and a charge of *severity* upon your misunderstanding of it. I do not think the sentence to which I refer is ambiguous. I contend that the construction does not authorize, certainly does not require the interpretation you put upon it, while the subject

matter suggests a different one. I did not say, at least did not intend to say, that the sentiments and doctrines which you entertain and preach, tended "to undermine the very foundations of Christian faith as much as those presented by Mr. Parker." Unless bereft of common sense, I could not mean to say that the views of a man, who believes in the authenticity and genuineness of the Christian Scriptures, and the authority of Christ as a divine teacher, tend to undermine Christianity, as much as the views of a man who denies that authority, and the authenticity and genuineness of those Scriptures, and it seems to me strange that any reader of my letter, in the exercise of candor, could have put such a construction upon my words. The comparison relates, evidently, only to the clause immediately preceding. What I meant to say, and all I meant to say was, that the Orthodox system of theology which you uphold, and the naturalism advocated by Mr. Parker, were alike at variance with the true and simple gospel of Christ, as I understand that gospel. This I said without intending to be severe or appear severe, but simply to remind you of the wide differences of opinion there are among Christians, and of the reasonableness of candor and charity.

It is gratifying to find at the close of your letter that, though you are unwilling to say distinctly whether you regard Unitarian churches and Unitarian ministers as Christians, you are yet willing to do justice to the good deeds and charitable acts of Unitarians. May you never again need them, but if you do, may you always receive at their hands, similar deeds of sympathy and kindness, and learn to think better of a faith which produces such fruits. I remain your friend and servant,

BOSTON, *June 30, 1841.*

S. K. LOTHROP.

Mr. Fairchild's reply :

TO THE REV. S. K. LOTHROP :

MY DEAR SIR, — In your letter of the 3d inst., you express your thanks for mine of the 25th of June; especially "for its courteous tone and spirit." Permit me to express my thanks for yours, and for the same reason. "The courteous tone and spirit" of your last letter, are in such striking contrast, as it seems to me, with the "tone and spirit" of your first, that, if my letter was, in any measure, the cause of the change, its publication has already done *some* good, for which I feel grateful.

After a perusal of your letter, the first impression on my mind was, that there was nothing in it, relating to the matter in controversy, which required an answer. But on a re-perusal, I be-

came convinced that there were two or three points which claimed some notice. To those points I wish now, with all possible brevity, to turn your attention. I say, with all possible brevity, because I would not weary the patience of the kind Editor who gives us the use of his paper, or offend the public taste by the frequency and length of our communications. I was hoping that your letter and my answer would have ended the controversy, so far as we, personally, are concerned. But it seems that you were not satisfied.

You make one statement in your letter, as a matter of fact, which requires correction. The statement I will here quote: "Though it was generally understood that the sermon was in press, you chose to hasten and forestall the discussion of it, and give it a peculiar character and direction, by a public communication in the newspapers, proposing certain questions to the members of the ordaining council." To this I reply, that though it may have been "generally understood that the sermon was in press," it was not so understood by *me*. Not the slightest intimation was given me that the sermon was in press, or ever would be there, till after our report of it was published. And if the sermon was actually in press on the 28th of May, the date of our report, and did not leave the press till after the middle of June, (which was really the case,) then there must have been, as it seems to me, a very uncommon delay on the part of the printers. Besides, if you will look at Mr. Parker's preface to his sermon, you will find it dated June 17th; in the very first sentence of which he says, "This discourse is now printed in consequence of some incorrect rumors and printed statements respecting its contents." I know of no "printed statements respecting its contents," having appeared till after our report was published. Of course the sermon was printed in *consequence* of our statements. Is it not evident, therefore, that you labor under a mistake as to the fact that the sermon *was* in press at the time of which you speak? It is very certain that all your brethren did not know that the sermon was in press or about to be in press, at the time of the publication of our report. For some of them censured me, as I thought, rather severely for making the matter public at all, on the ground that it would create an unpleasant excitement among the people. And the question was distinctly proposed to me, whether I should not have acted a much wiser part in keeping the sentiments of the sermon from the public eye, and seeking to remove my grievances by a personal interview with Mr. Parker, and remonstrating against his sentiments in private? It was my impression then, and has been

ever since, that if our report had never appeared, the sermon would not have been put to press at all. This, however, is a mere opinion, and must be taken for what it is worth.

Permit me to add in this connexion, that I have no recollection of exchanging one word with any Unitarian clergymen on the subject of Mr. Parker's sermon, till after our report was prepared for publication. One week subsequent to the ordination, I had the interview with Dr. Pierce, to which allusion was made in my former letter. In that conversation, when I mentioned to him that we were about to publish some account of the sermon, he said, "I hope you do not," or "I presume you do not consider that sermon as a correct exhibition of the sentiments of Unitarians generally." He certainly gave me to understand that they were not *his* sentiments, and that he should not exchange pulpits again with Mr. Parker.

You intimate in your letter that I had assumed the position and office of a public catechiser of you, and those associated with you. I *did* not intend, and *do* not intend to assume any such position and office. But I here feel a strong desire to ask, without designing to be your catechiser, (certainly not in any offensive sense,) whether the Bible does not hold you to some responsibility when you assist in ordaining a man to the office of a Christian pastor? John, in one of his epistles, enjoins it upon those to whom he wrote, not to bid any man God speed, who should not bring to them the doctrine of Christ. The reason he assigns is this: — "For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds." Now deism is certainly not "the doctrine of Christ." And if it be not "bidding a man God speed" to take part in inducting him into the ministerial office, pray tell me what is? Did you *then* know, or do you *now* know, that the preacher was not proclaiming the sentiments of the candidate? Surely, the presumption was, that they sympathized with each other in the doctrines advanced. And you give no intimation that you had any knowledge to the contrary. The evidence on which you proceeded to ordain the candidate, as mentioned in your letter, does not meet the case at all. What you say of him, might have been quite sufficient to prove that he was not a deist at those periods of time which you specify. But how did you know that the young man had not totally changed his sentiments, and gone over to deism, or even flown off into the unknown regions of transcendentalism?

While you admit that my motive was "perfectly pure and honorable" in wishing to know whether Unitarian clergymen are willing "knowingly to unite with deists in ordaining men to the

work of the Christian ministry ;” yet you express regret that my “desire to know was not accompanied with a wiser discernment of the best and most direct sources of information.” You then refer me, as “sources of information,” to the editors of the ‘Christian Register,’ the ‘Monthly Miscellany,’ and the ‘Christian Examiner.’ Now suppose I had made application to either of these editors for the desired information. Would he not most probably have replied as you did in your first letter? — “No Unitarian clergyman feels himself responsible for his brethren, or authorized to speak for them. We recognize no creed, covenant, or union of any kind, that interferes with individual liberty and independence. I cannot, therefore, answer for all my brethren. I can only speak for myself.” And this you call “a wiser discernment of the best sources of information !” It strikes me that this kind of wisdom would have been folly. At any rate, I had not the folly to seek information in any such way. Do you perceive no inconsistency in thus directing me to “the best sources of information?” Just think of it. When an inquiry is made as to the sentiments of a man whom you ordain as a preacher of the gospel, then all responsibility is disclaimed, on the ground that you have no creed, and never interfere with individual liberty and independence. But when you wish to make the impression on the public mind that I am quite culpable for not having a better knowledge of the sentiments of the Unitarians, then you can express your “regret that my desire to know was not accompanied with a wiser discernment of the best and most direct sources of information ;” that is, you regret that I did not apply to certain editors. Then it seems that there are men who are authorized to speak for the denomination. If so, with what propriety could you say to me that “no Unitarian clergyman feels authorized to speak for his brethren?” But waiving this, had I gone to them, they, according to your letter, would have answered, if they answered at all, that “the Unitarians have no creed ; and therefore no one is responsible for another.” In what a sad predicament this would have placed *me*, not to say *them* !

You think that I ought to infer, from what you said in your first letter, that you do not regard Mr. Parker as a Christian minister. I did not think myself authorized to draw any such inference. And even in your last letter, in which you say that such an inference necessarily follows, you immediately add the following saving clause, which seems to forbid such an inference — “He is not one with whom I could have intimate sympathy and fellowship.” Is this saying that you do not regard him as

a Christian minister? Now there may be Orthodox clergymen of whom I might say the same, and yet most readily recognize them as Christian ministers, and unite with them as such in ordaining councils. Nay, more; reasons might exist sufficient to justify me in not admitting an Orthodox clergyman into my pulpit, without the least design of signifying thereby that, in my opinion, he ought to leave the ministry, or that he ought not to be regarded as a Christian minister.

You say in your letter that I made a personal attack upon you. Nothing in the paper of which you complain, can justify you in making such a declaration. No, sir, I did not attack you. I asked a civil question, and in a civil manner, not addressing myself to you more than to any other member of the council. True, in speaking of the officiating members, I mentioned that you gave the charge, and expressed my disappointment that you did not remonstrate against the sentiments of Mr. Parker. Do you call this a personal attack? I presume that no one will sympathize with you in this feeling. Having thus adverted to your charge, permit me here to say a word which, perhaps, ought to have been said in my first letter. And I would say it in all kindness, and without designing any personal attack. Though in that charge you said many things which were in direct opposition to some of the sentiments of the preacher, yet you made one expression which I deeply regretted to hear. In alluding to some point which had been dwelt upon in the sermon, (I do not now recollect what,) you expressed yourself (extemporaneously, of course) in language like this — “which has been so eloquently and forcibly illustrated by the preacher.” Now, if this were true, and I do not say that it was not true, as you meant to apply it, yet, as “the truth is not to be spoken at all times,” it seemed to me that this was precisely one of those occasions when nothing should have been said in commendation of any portion of the sermon, however truly said, lest the antidote which you seem to think you administered, should thereby fail to counteract the pernicious effects of the poison. A pill, whose principal ingredient is arsenic, cannot be so mixed with wholesome ingredients as to take away its destructive properties. It is arsenic still; and he who takes it, will find it fatal still.

I do not call in question Mr. Parker’s right to be a deist, or even an atheist. However deeply I might regret that his investigations should lead him to such results, yet his right to do so is admitted. And if any people, calling themselves religious, wish to have him for their teacher, be it so. But let the responsibility rest on him and them alone. For a council of profes-

sedly Christian ministers to unite in ordaining a man holding such sentiments, over such a people, is truly such an anomaly in the moral world, as no words of mine can adequately describe.

In one part of your letter you are, as it seems to me, rather disingenuous. You assume that I regard *all* Unitarians as infidels; that I have so treated them, and intend so to treat them. And you say that the questions proposed by me are not pertinent. "They are without force or meaning. They amount to simply asking whether infidels and deists sympathize with infidels and deists; whether those who are not Christians are ready to unite with those who are not Christians, in introducing men into the Christian ministry,—questions which, at least, seem to carry absurdity upon their face. This is the position in which you have placed yourself by your inquiries." No, sir, you mistake. I have placed myself in no such position. Nor will I allow you to place me there. The above questions, you say, "carry absurdity upon their face." So they do. But they are not questions of my asking. And I beg you not to lay this absurdity to my charge, till I have done something to deserve it. My position is this:—*Unitarian clergymen call themselves Christian ministers. Do they call Mr. Parker a Christian minister?* It is presumed that you *now* understand my position.

I would speak kindly; yet you will excuse me if I speak plainly and fearlessly. I am sorry to see in your letter what appears to be a labored effort on your part, to exonerate the council from all responsibility or blame in the matter of that ordination, and to raise a smoke and dust in order to conceal from the public eye the very point which ought to be distinctly seen. And what is that point? It is simply this: *Does a Council assume no responsibility in uniting with a known deist, in the services of an ordination? and is an ordained deist regarded by the members of that Council as a Christian minister?* Here is a matter of fact standing out prominently, as easily discernible as the noon-day sun in the cloudless heavens, that you and your brethren united in council with a deist; with one whom you acknowledge to be a deist; and this same deist preached the sermon on that occasion; and as the sermon is so principal a part of an ordaining service, this deist was, in an important sense, the organ of that council. And your attempt to evade responsibility in this matter, by supposing the case of three Unitarian clergymen being present by invitation, at an Orthodox ordination, &c., does not, in the least, obviate the difficulty, or remove your embarrassment. The

question does not relate to the different interpretations which different clergymen may give of certain texts, or portions of Scripture. But this is the question: *Is a man who denies the divine authority of the Bible as a standard of truth, recognized by the Unitarian clergy as a Christian minister? Does, or does not the known fact that a man is a deist, so disqualify him for your fellowship, that you cease to recognize him as a Christian minister?* This is the question to be met, and from which you will find it difficult to escape.

Your attempt at evasion by supposing what the candidate and the congregation over whom he was to be ordained might have replied to a remonstrance of yours, utterly fails. For if it be true that a council assume no responsibility on such an occasion, then why meet, and deliberate, and vote at all? This, as I understand the matter, is not necessary in order to render the connexion between the candidate and congregation a legal one. They can make their own bargains without the intervention of a council. Or if their intervention be necessary to make the connexion legal, then surely responsibility is involved. Neither can the difficulty be met by saying, (I do not know that you are inclined to say it,) that you were unacquainted with the sentiments of Mr. Parker, before you voted to make him your preacher on that occasion. I will not do you the injustice even to insinuate that you were ignorant of the fact that Mr. Parker, some months since, stood up, in the Chardon-street chapel, as the fearless advocate of those who were laboring to undermine the very foundation of the Christian Sabbath, the Christian Church, and the Christian Ministry, as institutions ordained of God. Reports of his speeches on that occasion, were published in the newspapers; and it would be "passing strange," if they did not fall into your own hands. Neither can it be supposed that you were unacquainted with a publication called the *Dial*, in the October number of which, sentiments are advanced by Mr. Parker, as truly deistical as those in his ordination sermon.

All that you say in your letter about the Orthodox Congregationalists refusing to acknowledge Unitarian Congregationalists as Christians, is, in my judgment, wholly irrelevant. What, though they do, or do not, make this acknowledgment. Is that answering the question whether the Unitarian clergy do, or do not, recognize deists as Christians? What, though my brother Adams, in his sermon on "injuries done to Christ," did, or did not, say what you attribute to him. You will excuse me for interposing a word here in reference to him. True, he needs

not my advocacy. But in justice to him, I must say that your insinuations with regard to that sermon are, as I think, unfair, and not authorized by the facts in the case. But let him have said what he may, does that answer the question whether you do, or do not, have fellowship with deists, as ministers of the Gospel? What, though the Orthodox clergy do, or do not, differ among themselves on certain points of doctrine? Does that settle the question that you assume no responsibility in uniting with deists in the services of an ordaining Council? As well might you say that differences of opinion respecting certain diseases among medical practitioners, exonerated our Medical Society from all responsibility or blame for giving a diploma to a mere quack. And when an injured and insulted community call upon them for their reasons in committing this outrage, would you excuse them on the ground that a certain portion of the people did not believe him to be a quack, and that he was licensed to practice to gratify their wishes? How would the public feel?—how would you yourself feel, if some one of the physicians who signed the diploma, should coolly say to the community who make this call, “that is his affair and their affair, and not mine?” On the contrary, would not the gentlemen whose business it is to give diplomas, reply to such an application,—“We have examined the candidate, and find him altogether deficient in medical science and skill. We regard the life and health of our fellow-citizens, and feel ourselves responsible for what we do in this matter. If any portion of the people *will* have such a man as their physician, and if he *will* practice among them, then on him and them be the responsibility. We will not assume one particle of it.” And ought not the teachers of religion to feel as much concern for the *moral* health of the community, as do physicians for its *natural* health? And permit me to ask, is it a light matter to give your sanction and authority to a transaction whereby a man is introduced into the pulpit, who denies the divine authority and inspiration of the Bible, and holds up that blessed book to ridicule and scorn? who says that its writers were no more inspired than we may be, if we will only pay the price? Is it doing no injury thus to remove the salutary restraints of the Bible from the public mind? Do you owe nothing to the morals of the community? Are you willing that they should be corrupted and spoiled by the philosophical speculations and deistical reasonings of men whom you have authorized to stand up in the pulpit as preachers of the Gospel? All this strikes me as an outrage upon common decency and common sense, as

well as upon our common Christianity. I have too much respect for your character to believe that, on sober reflection, you will justify any such procedure. Indeed, charity forces me to the conclusion that you now condemn it as heartily as I do.

Had the preacher differed from you and your brethren merely as to his understanding of what the Bible really teaches, that would not have been at all uncommon or surprising. But when he denied the divine authority of the Bible itself, and utterly discarded it as a standard of truth, the matter assumed quite a different aspect. Our wise Senators in Congress may differ, and honestly differ, in their views of what the constitution really teaches. But suppose one of their number should stand up in their presence and utter language like this: "The Constitution of the United States is no standard of authority for me; and I will not appeal to it as such. It has no binding force on my conscience or judgment. The framers of it, though wise and good men, were mistaken in their views of civil government. This is an age of improvement; and their obsolete notions shall not bind me. I discard them altogether." In such a case, would not his fellow-senators, yea, and the spectators too, be fully justified in raising the cry of *treason! treason!* And if the cry should be raised in the senate-chamber itself, would any true patriots, whether Whigs or Democrats, regret that "the service was interrupted? Or would grave Senators say that they assumed no responsibility in permitting him to retain a seat among them? Would they say that that was an affair which concerned only him and his constituents?

You will not, my dear sir, understand me, in any thing that I have said, as demanding of you and your brethren, the deposing of Mr. Parker from the ministry. I make no such demand. I have no right to make it. This is certainly, beyond all doubt or controversy, his affair and your affair, and not mine. I only wish to say, (if I do not misunderstand you,) that according to your ideas of "congregational principles," when Unitarian clergymen are sitting in Council with known deists, they must make no remonstrance, or even refuse to vote for a deist to be their preacher, lest by so doing they should "interrupt the service," and cast an implied censure on the candidate and the people who have chosen him as their religious teacher. Or it may be, because they cannot depart from the no-creed principle that they have adopted, which forbids them to inquire into any man's faith, not allowing them even to ask whether a candidate for ordination be an atheist, or a deist, or any thing else except a moral man; for the proposing of these questions would seem

to imply a creed. And a creed, you know, is very frightful to some, and must by all means be avoided. But why so much afraid of a standard, a covenant, a creed? It is not so in politics. Why should it be so in religion? But the time may come when you and your brethren who agree with you in "seriously and solemnly protesting against the sentiments advanced by Mr. Parker," will be compelled either to have a creed, or to hold Christian and Ministerial Fellowship with deists. But this, you will say, is a matter which does not concern me, and that I ought not thus to obtrude upon you my opinion. I would not knowingly be guilty of any thing discourteous; but as the opinion is expressed in all kindness, I hope it will be kindly received.

You may possibly complain because I have not answered all your multitudinous questions. I am not aware of having passed a single question unnoticed which has the least *necessary* connexion with the matter at issue. And to discuss other questions than the one which has been repeatedly proposed to you, and which all the friends of the Bible of every name, are expecting you to answer, would be wholly out of time, and out of place.

Yours, with sincere affection, J. H. FAIRCHILD.

Boston, July 8, 1841.

From the 'Puritan' of July 8th:—

SOUTH BOSTON ORDINATION AGAIN.

The question has often been asked—Does Mr. Shackford, who was ordained in connexion with Mr. Parker's notorious sermon, concur with the principles of that sermon? And to this we say unhesitatingly—yes. If we know it from other sources, we will not make use of those other sources of evidence. We are fully authorized from circumstances already before the public, to make the inference without hesitation or qualification. Usage assigns to the pastor elect the selection of the preacher, and it has by that usage come to be understood that the preacher is one particularly in the confidence of the pastor elect. This circumstance creates so strong a presumption that Mr. S. agrees with Mr. P., that few in the absence of evidence to the contrary could doubt it. And what lack there is of proof is now made up by his silence. If he did not believe the doctrine of that sermon, he has had strong reasons for publicly disclaiming it. He must have known that it would be imputed to him, and that the community in his silence would rest in that imputation. In such circumstances, silence amounts to consent. In conclusion, then, it is inevitable from this source alone, and we

are now sure that until he changes his mind, Mr. Shackford will not say before the public that the sentiments of the sermon are not his sentiments.

But here is another fact worth notice, which is, that the Unitarian ministers of this vicinity have ordained a man of such sentiments as that sermon expresses, in a professedly Christian pulpit. By ignorance or design, they united in ordaining a man of such sentiments. If they say that they did know his sentiments, then we say that their rule of action, by which they refuse to inquire even whether the candidate be a Christian or an Infidel, is strangely at fault. It is not in obedience to the divine injunction, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins." But can they say as much as that none of them knew the fact? They certainly knew Mr. Parker's sentiments, and his selection of Mr. P. should have led them to inquire. If they did know it, what are we to think of their own standing, touching Christianity and Infidelity? If they did not, how can their ignorance be excused? We will not disguise our conviction that the preacher and pastor elect were not alone among the enactors of that farce, in sustaining those sentiments.

From the 'Semi-Weekly Courier' of July 19th:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER:

It will be remembered that in the year 1819, a sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Channing of this city, at the ordination of Mr. Sparks in Baltimore, and that it was followed by letters, written by several of our most distinguished divines, such as Professor Stuart and Dr. Woods of Andover, and Dr. Ware, senior, of Cambridge. The controversy was conducted "with moderation, temperance, and urbanity." A favorable result was anticipated, and according to my present recollection, all parties were satisfied that the cause of truth had not suffered. In one of the letters which make a part of the controversy, addressed by Professor Stuart to the Rev. Dr. Channing, I find the following remarks, and believing that they will be interesting, at the present time, to many of your readers, I take the liberty of sending them to you, that, if you think proper, you may give them a place in the Courier.

The friends of Mr. Parker appear to have been taken by surprise by his sentiments as set forth in his South Boston sermon. I think you and your readers will say, after reading these remarks of Professor Stuart, published twenty-one years ago, that this recent developement could have been the occasion of no surprise to him.

Y.

“I am well satisfied that the course of reasoning in which you have embarked, and the principles by which you explain away the Divinity of the Saviour, must lead most men who approve them, eventually, to the conclusion, that the Bible is not of Divine origin, and does not oblige us to belief or obedience. I do not aver that they will certainly lead you there. The remains of your former education and belief may still serve to guard you against the bolder conclusions of some of your brethren, who have not been placed under instruction such as you enjoyed in early life. You have more serious views of the importance of religion than many, perhaps most, of those who speculate with you. Consistency, too, will afford strong inducement not to give up the Divine authority of the Scriptures. Yet many of your younger brethren have no inconsistency to fear, by adopting such views. Deeming what you have publicly taught them to be true, viz.:—that it is ‘no crime to believe with Mr. Belsham,’ who boldly and plainly declares that the *Scriptures are not the word of God*; feeling the inconsistency (as I am certain some of them will and do feel it) of violating the fundamental rules of interpretation, in order to make the apostles speak, as in their apprehension they ought to speak, and unable to reconcile what the apostles say with their own views, they will throw off the restraint which the old ideas of the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures impose on them, and receive them simply on the ground on which they place any other writings of a moral and religious nature. I make no pretensions to uncommon foresight, in regard to this subject. I certainly do not say these things with invidious designs, and for the sake of kindling the fire of contention. Very far from it. On the contrary, I believe the parties now contending here will have no quiet until this ground be openly taken on your part. For myself, I view it as incomparably more desirable, in almost every point of view, that the authority of the Scriptures should at once be cast off, and its claims to Divine inspiration rejected, than that such rules of exegesis should be introduced, as make the Scriptures speak, *nolens volens*, whatever any party may desire. Avowed unbelief in the Divine authority of the Scriptures can never continue long in the present day of light and examination. Such a state of things may pass away with the generation who act in it. But it is a more difficult matter, to purge away the stain which Christianity may contract by violated laws of interpretation, because those who indulge in such a violation profess to respect the Christian religion, and to acknowledge its Divine original. They may therefore obtain and hold for a long time great influence over the mass of the people, who are not accustomed to

examine in a critical manner the nicer points of theology. If opponents to the sentiments in question lift up the voice of warning, they may not be heard. They are liable to the imputation of bigotry, illiberality, or ignorance. But when men *professedly* cast off their respect for the authority of the Scriptures, the case becomes different, and the great body of plain and sober people will revolt."

From the 'Puritan' of July 22:—

PROGRESS.

We have learned from a source to which we give full credit, that Rev. Mr. Pierpont of this city has publicly indorsed, in his own pulpit, the sentiments of the sermon of Mr. Parker, at the South Boston ordination; that he declared his concurrence in the sermon as a whole, taking exceptions to two or three sentences in it. If all Unitarian ministers were as ingenuous as Mr. Pierpont, there would, we doubt not, be other like notes of approbation, coming from Boston pulpits. We understand, also, that Rev. Mr. Putnam, of Roxbury, has exchanged pulpits with Mr. Parker, since the excitement in relation to that sermon. It seems now clearly indicated that Mr. P. will be sustained and countenanced in his infidelity by the great body of his brethren.

The following letter of the Rev. Mr. Adams, Pastor of Essex-street Church, was published in the 'Courier' of August 3d:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE COURIER:

In your paper of July 3d, the Rev. S. K. Lothrop, in a letter to the Rev. J. H. Fairchild, said—

"Some few weeks ago, when all Unitarians were described by one of your brethren, in a printed sermon, as doing more injury to the Saviour than Judas who betrayed him, or the Jews who crucified him, or Saul who persecuted his disciples, I felt a 'strong wish to know' whether all the Orthodox clergymen of Boston and vicinity sympathized with the sentiments and approved of the uncharitable comparisons of that sermon."

As the author of that sermon, permit me to say that I was not a little surprised at the terms in which Mr. Lothrop has thus thought proper to allude to it. A statement of facts will show that my surprise was just.

Soon after the publication of my sermon, an anonymous writer having addressed a letter to me in the 'Christian Register,' I wrote a reply, and put it into the hands of Mr. Lothrop, as one of the editors of the 'Register,' and by him it was inserted in his paper. The following extract from what Mr. Lothrop thus

published for me will show with how much propriety he could subsequently allude to my sermon as he has done in the sentence above quoted from him.

In my letter to the anonymous writer in the 'Register,' I said —

“Your letter represents my expostulation with those who, in my view, write and preach against Christ, as a condemnation of every one bearing the name of Unitarian. I am happy to inform you that neither my belief nor my feelings justify this representation.

“I believe that some who call themselves Unitarians, and whose religious associations are all with Unitarians, will be saved. I believe that they are regenerated, that they exercise faith in Christ as having made propitiation for sin; which faith, though not definite and clear to their own minds, is justifying faith. Though they would, perhaps, say, that they do not believe in the Trinity, in the Godhead, nor in the supreme deity of Christ, they do still, however inconsistently, exercise implicit trust in something which Christ has done as the meritorious ground of salvation.

“The manner in which Unitarianism commenced in this country, will account, in part, for the peculiar position of these individuals. Some of them were brought up under evangelical influences which were wrought into their minds beyond the reach of those changes of name and worship which have almost insensibly happened to them. They had learned the Assembly's Catechism, they had heard the form of sound words in their maturer years, from our predecessors in the ministry, and their religious experience was directed by at least nominally Orthodox ministrations. Unitarianism came in like a quiet, atmospheric change, under which the established order of religious associations proceeded as from the beginning. Few, if any, were startled, or repelled from their churches and ministers. ‘I can remember the time,’ says a writer in the ‘Christian Examiner,’ (Vol. III., p. 114,) ‘and I am not old, when, though Boston was full of Unitarianism, there was no open profession of it. A dead silence maintained in the pulpit on doctrinal subjects, a silence which was not disturbed by the press.’

“One of the present Unitarian ministers of Boston, in an interesting letter, written in 1812, in England, (quoted in the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, vol. II., p. 224,) says, ‘I never heard him, (Dr. Freeman,) express a Unitarian sentiment, and I believe he carefully avoids it in the pulpit, because it might unnecessarily disturb some of his hearers. There is now one more

gentleman in Boston, who, with his intimate friends, may perhaps be considered a Unitarian ; but he maintains the same cautious reserve, and from neither his sermons, his prayers, nor his private conversation, could I infer that he was a Unitarian. Now even admitting, what I hardly think I have a right to do, that these (three) gentlemen are Unitarians, to what can all this prudent reserve be ascribed, but to their conviction that the preaching of Unitarian doctrines would be offensive to their hearers, and injurious to their usefulness?"

"These statements will account for what I believe to be a fact, that there have been, and are still, some individuals attached to Unitarian places of worship, who exercise saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, while they assent to the technical names and forms of the denomination which has grown around them, and which they may be said never to have joined. Besides these individuals of the Old School, I have been accustomed to think that there may be others amongst the Unitarians, who, notwithstanding the Unitarian instructions which they have always heard, and the faith they outwardly profess, almost unconsciously rely for salvation upon something vicarious and meritorious in the Saviour. I believe that a conscious need of an atonement for sin is native to the human mind, that it is extremely difficult to destroy it, that many practically trust in the atonement, while, from adventitious habits and views, they shrink from the sectarian presentation of the doctrine. I believe that there are some such individuals who call themselves Unitarians, but whose crowns will hereafter be amongst the first to fall at the feet of their Divine Redeemer, whose voices will cry the louder for their suppression here, 'Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be honor, and glory, and blessing.' Amongst the monuments of divine grace in Heaven, I believe there will be some who will be saved from the midst of decided Unitarian influences and errors ; — 'yet so as by fire.'

"I can go even further than this. I believe that some professedly Unitarian Ministers may be converted men, and true believers in Christ. They were accidentally thrown upon what we consider the wrong side, at the separation of the Orthodox from Unitarians. Some secret bond held them nominally with those who went further than they themselves ever did or can go in derogatory views and feelings concerning Christ.

"The ground of my hope with regard to all such individuals is, that they exercise scriptural faith in the vicarious atonement by Christ, which faith, though unfavorably affected by some

erroneous views, is essentially justifying faith, and that it will be so adjudged by the Searcher of Hearts.

“The general tenor of my sermon, as well as particular expressions in it, if you will read it again, I think will convince you that I do not condemn every one who bears the name of Unitarian, but that they only are intended in what I said who intelligently and from their hearts deny and preach against the Godhead and atonement of Christ.” [‘Christian Register,’ May 29.]

In view of the foregoing statements and explanations, injustice, I think, is evidently done me by Mr. Lothrop in his remark about my sermon. I shall not undertake to account for it, for I should find it difficult to do so. I would not willingly believe that the known tendencies in the feelings of many Unitarian laymen at the present time induced Mr. Lothrop to withhold the fact that I am discriminating and charitable in my judgment of Unitarians. I can conceive, however, that what I said in my sermon about those who intelligently, and from the heart, deny and preach against the Godhead and atoning Sacrifice of Christ, may have occasioned a state of mind in Mr. Lothrop unfavorable both to an impartial representation of my sermon and to a cheerful recognition of my explanations. It is also true that the leading proposition of my sermon was stated in general terms, viz: The greatest injury which man can do to Christ is to deny his Godhead and his atoning Sacrifice, — because I believed that my subsequent remarks in the sermon would make it unnecessary to state beforehand, that preachers were principally intended, and because, moreover, some laymen had made themselves obnoxious to the expostulations of the discourse. If I did not succeed, in my *sermon*, as I believe I did, in showing whom I had in mind, I certainly did in the *letter* which I gave Mr. Lothrop for his paper, and his omission to notice my explanations is not consistent with my ideas of uprightness or of honorable controversy.

But my object now in writing is not that I wish to defend myself against personal injustice, nor to complain of any apparent supercilious disregard of my explanations, but because the position of many Unitarians at the present time makes it desirable that they should be re-assured of what I have now repeatedly said, that their friends of the Orthodox persuasion regard them with great interest and hope. For it cannot be concealed that many things have been preached and written of late by Unitarian ministers, which have found no sympathy from many who,

nevertheless, call themselves Unitarians. It will not require many more such developments of opinion and feeling as were made at the South-Boston Ordination to justify to every serious Unitarian layman all that has been said respecting injuries done to Christ.

A word or two about "the uncharitable comparisons of my sermon." At the South-Boston ordination, the story of the miraculous conception of Christ was declared to be of similar effect with those concerning the origin of Hercules and Jupiter. [See Mr. Parker's Sermon, ("Various Readings") note to page 15.] I am aware, indeed, that this opinion is not altogether new. The Unitarian "Improved Version of the New Testament" says, (page 2,) "The account of the miraculous conception of Christ was probably the fiction of some early Gentile convert, who hoped, by elevating the dignity of the Founder, to abate the popular prejudice against the sect." In my sermon, I assumed the position, and endeavored to illustrate it, in order to prepare the way for my expostulations, and not for contumely or scorn, that some things which had been said against Christ (and I will now place the above remarks, respecting the Scripture history, with them) were, in my view, more injurious to him than his betrayal, or crucifixion, or the persecution of his followers. To suppose otherwise, it seems to me, is to suppose that Christ thinks more of a wrong done to his person, and to the persons of his followers, than to the foundations of human faith and salvation.

Having now shown repeatedly to whom I did not intend that the remarks in my sermon should apply, I must be indulged with a word in regard to those to whom I did address them. The imputation of uncharitableness or unkindness, even towards them, on my part, is not warranted by my present feelings, at being misrepresented, nor by the tone and manner of my sermon. The Unitarian reviewer of it recognized, in connexion with it, a "spirit of love and candor," of "apparent sincerity and sadness," of "gentle expostulation and pitying prayer." My reply to him led him to thank me for "personal courtesy and gracious speech," and honorably to retract an odious charge which he had laid against me. I commend his example to Mr. Lothrop. It would have been unhappy, indeed, had I felt or expressed "uncharitableness" or unkindness, in connexion with the sorrow and the fears which I was constrained to utter, and which I still entertain, with regard to the present influence and the future prospects of those who were intended by my sermon. I wished, and still wish, especially in connexion with these sub-

jects, to feel and write in the spirit of that advice in "The Church Porch : " —

" Be calm in arguing, for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More than his sicknesses or poverty?
In *love*, I should, but anger is not love,
Nor wisdom neither : — therefore gently move."

So that, if any have been induced to believe that I intended, in any thing I have said, to utter indiscriminate condemnation of all in their denomination who, for any reason, consent to bear its name, they may see by my quotation from the 'Christian Register' that this is not true. And if any one, believing that he comes within the application of my discourse, thinks that my personal feelings towards him must therefore be " uncharitable " or hostile, I would refer him to the expressions of sincere interest and benevolent concern, which the Unitarian reviewer, already mentioned, acknowledged to be mingled with my expostulations.

N. ADAMS.

Boston, July 30, 1841.

BOSTON, July 28, 1841.

MESSRS. SAXTON & PEIRCE :

Understanding that you are about to publish facts respecting the Unitarian ordination at South Boston, I feel under some moral obligation to communicate to you a remark made by one of the Council, which will present him before the public in a more favorable light, as having but little sympathy with some of the sentiments expressed on that occasion. The Rev. George Putnam, of Roxbury, in his address to the Hawes' Place Congregational Society, said, " If you think you belong to a sect, you are mistaken. There was a time when you belonged to the Unitarian sect, but that time has gone by, and I pray God, it may never again return. There is now no Unitarian sect, for there are, at the present time, as great diversity of sentiments among that class of Christians, as among all other sects together." As my notes are somewhat effaced by handling, I may have made some trifling inaccuracy in copying them, word for word ; but of this I am quite certain, that the above is correct in the sentiments they express, for I have them marked deep in my memory.

Truly yours,

THOS. DRIVER.

Boston, August 2, 1841.

MESSRS. SAXTON & PEIRCE :

When I wrote to you last, it was my design to have given you a few quotations from the last edition of Mr. Parker's sermon. I am now influenced to do it, as some have thought the communication of brethren Fairchild, Dunham and myself, did not give Mr. Parker's production, as preached, a fair representation. I send you below a few extracts, from the last edition, putting in, or taking out of, the sentences some of the expressions which *the writer says* were or were not preached ; or in other words, as he says they were preached.

Says the writer, page 13 and onward, "First, the doctrine respecting the origin and authority and nature of the Old and New Testament," is transitory. "Every word of the Jewish record was regarded as miraculously inspired, and therefore as infallibly true. It was believed that the Christian religion itself rested thereon, and must stand or fall with the *immaculate Hebrew text*." [What a sneer!] "On the authority of the written Word, [is there any Word not written?] man was taught to believe *impossible legends*, conflicting assertions ; to take *fiction* for fact ; a *dream* for a miraculous revelation of God ; an oriental poem for a grave history of miraculous events ; a collection of amatory idyls for a serious discourse 'touching the mutual love of Christ and the church ;' they have been taught to accept a picture sketched by some glowing eastern imagination, never intended to be taken for a reality, as a proof that the Infinite God spoke in human words, appeared in the shape of a cloud, a flaming bush, or a man who ate and drank and vanished into smoke ; that he gave counsels to-day and the opposite to-morrow," &c. What a description of the Old Testament is this ! Has Thomas Paine done more to stigmatize it ?

He then adds, "Questions in philosophy, questions in the Christian religion, have been settled by an appeal to this book. * * * * It has been assumed at the outset, *with no shadow of evidence*, that those writers held a miraculous communication with God, such as he granted to no other. * * * * "Matters have come to such a pass that, even now, he is deemed an infidel, if not by implication an atheist, whose *reverence* for the Most High *forbids him to believe* that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his Son, *a thought at which the flesh creeps with horror* ; to believe it solely on the authority of an oriental story, written down nobody knows when, or by whom, or for what purpose ; which may be a poem, but cannot be the record

of a fact, unless God is the *author of confusion and a lie.*" * * *
 "Christian teachers themselves have differed so widely in their notion of the doctrines and meaning of those books, that it makes one weep to think of the follies deduced therefrom. But modern criticism is fast *breaking to pieces the idol* which men have made out of the Scriptures."

"The history of opinions on the New Testament, is quite similar. It has been assumed at the outset, it would seem with no sufficient reason, without the *smallest* pretence on its writers' part, that all of its authors were infallibly and miraculously inspired, so that they could commit no error of doctrine or fact. Men have been bid to close their eyes at the *obvious* difference between Luke and John; the *serious* disagreement between Paul and Peter; to believe on the *smallest* evidence, accounts which shock the moral sense and revolt the reason, and tend to place Jesus in the same series with Hercules and Apollonius of Tyana, and to degrade the Infinite God to the same level with Neptune and Jupiter;* accounts which Paul in his Epistles never mentions, [viz. the story of the Evangelist respecting the conversation with the angel, with Mary's becoming the mother of Jesus, and what God was about to do by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost,] though he had also a vein of the miraculous [marvellous] running quite through him." "Men have been told that *all these things* must be taken as parts of Christianity, and if they accept the religion, they must take all these accessories along with it."

* Hercules was one of the heathen gods. According to the ancients, he was the son, by repute, of the god Jupiter, by the celebrated virgin Alemena, and the product of three nights' stolen introduction to the bed of this beautiful female. He was, at his eighth month, exposed to two snakes, by jealous Juno, but he escaped by his crushing these serpents to death with his own hands. He performed many mighty prodigies during life. He became one of the suitors of Dijonira and lived with her in careless intimacy, after he had overcome all his rivals. He had other maidens for his bed companions, and by them many children. Apollonius' mother is said to have had a communication from the gods, before he was conceived, that she should bring forth a child, who should be the wonder of the age. His whole history is filled with legends. Jupiter had no less than seven females of pleasure, and by them many children. Neptune was a son of Saturn and Ops, and brother to Jupiter. He was the god of the ocean, as his brother was of the land. The amours of Neptune are numerous. He obtained, by the means of a dolphin, the favors of Amphitrite, who had made a vow of perpetual celibacy, and he placed among the constellations the fish which had persuaded the goddess to become his wife. Neptune became a horse to enjoy the company of Ceres.

I cannot help apologizing to the injured public for introducing such vulgar allusions, but as painful as it is and as much as it grieves my heart, I have been compelled to do it by following "the forcible, eloquent, *beautiful* and *refined* writer," Mr. Parker.

So the story of the angel appearing to Mary, and of the *miraculous* conception of Jesus, if believed, places the "Son of the Highest" in the adjoining niche with Hercules and Apollonius, and the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Ghost, degrades Jehovah to a level with the lascivious Neptune and Jupiter. Does not the miraculous manner by which God formed man out of the dust of the ground, also place him with some one of the degraded heathen gods? Would Mr. P. have us believe that the history of the virgin Mary is all fiction? That Mary was an adulteress, as Joseph at first thought she was, and that the Founder of Mr. Parker's religion is a bastard? And is the writer of such revolting sentiments to be still received as a Unitarian clergyman, and are exchanges to be maintained with him as a minister of the New Testament? * I reverence those two clergymen, who have said *No*: and the one, who would leave the ministry if he held such sentiments.

Again he adds, after much more of similar character, "So the world goes. An *idolatrous* regard for the *imperfect scripture* of God's word is the apple of Atalanta which defeats theologians running for the hand of Divine truth.† Thus a regard to the 'written word,' thrown down by the Prophets and Apostles, prevents the lovers of revelation from arriving at the hand of divine truth."

Again and again, p. 18. "Christianity does not rest on the infallible authority of the New Testament." "I cannot see that Christianity depends on the personal authority of Jesus." "So if it could be proved in opposition to the greatest amount of evidence ever collected on any similar point, that the gospels were the fabrication of designing and artful men, that Jesus of Nazareth had never lived, still *Christianity would stand firm and fear no evil. None of the doctrines* of that religion would fall to the ground, for if true, they stand by themselves." "If Christianity rests on the personal authority of Jesus alone, then there is no certainty of its truth."

* Several Unitarians have exchanged with Mr. P. since this sermon was before the public, and he has once preached the Chauncy-Place weekly lecture, to the Unitarian ministers of Boston and its vicinity.

† Atalanta was the daughter of the King of Scyros. Many fabulous stories are told of her. She is represented to have determined to have lived in perpetual celibacy; but her beauty gained her many admirers, and to free herself from their importunities, she proposed to run a race with them and to become the wife of the one who arrived at the goal before her, but to slay every one who failed, with the dart she carried in her hand. Having slain many, Hippomenes proposed himself. Having received three golden apples from Venus, he, as he run with her, threw down the apples at some distance one from the other. She being influenced to pick them up, was beaten and married, according to the agreement, to the victor.

I give these notes that *all* may understand the allusions.

Again. "In an age of corruption, as all ages are, Jesus stood and looked up to God. There was nothing between him and the Father of all." * * * * "He would have us do the same ; worship with nothing between us and God ; act, think, feel, live, in perfect obedience to him ; and we never are *Christians* as he was the *Christ*, until we worship as Jesus did, *with no mediator*, with nothing between us and the Father of all." I make no comment. Let his sentences speak.

I cannot refrain from adding, as many are deceived by parts of the discourse in which there is much that *is truth*, that the cause of it is Mr. Parker's play upon the words "Christianity" and the "Word of Christ." He means, as all I have quoted proves, and much more in the discourse, not the written Christianity ; not the written words of Christ, but something out of sight, like water under ground, springing up in all hearts to some degree, aside from revelation.

Query. I wonder where those paragraphs are, which Mr. Parker said, in his preface to his discourse, he did not preach, but were added in the printed sermon. Are those the paragraphs, in the printed sermon, which qualify much which is offensive? We have eight pages of chips and scraps and filings of "the various readings," but not *one* of the paragraphs. I can only say, as a Unitarian clergyman said to me, "I am ashamed of such a budge. It is an insult upon the public."

Yours truly, THOMAS DRIVER.

The Christian Name and Christian Liberty.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED

AT THE CHURCH IN BRATTLE SQUARE,

ON

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1842.

BY SAMUEL K. LOTHROP,

Minister of that Church.

Published by Request.

BOSTON:

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THE following pamphlet was originally two sermons preached on two successive Sundays, October 30th, and November 6th. In printing them the text and the introduction to the second sermon, which was merely a recapitulation of the first, seemed unnecessary ; they are therefore omitted and the two thrown together into one. The introductory remarks and local allusions, made at the commencement of the first discourse, have been somewhat abridged, and some sentences, spoken extemporally at the close of the second, have been more fully written out. With these exceptions, the sermons are printed as they were delivered save the corrections necessary to prepare them for the press. For his delay in making these corrections and complying with their request to publish, the author trusts his numerous duties and engagements will be considered a sufficient excuse by the Members of his Congregation, to whom, in the humble hope that it may be instrumental in giving them some definite and satisfactory notions upon a point involving important considerations amid the religious speculations of the times, the discourse in its present form is respectfully and affectionately inscribed.

S. K. L.

Boston, December 20th, 1842.

S E R M O N .

M A T T. X V I. 15, 16.

But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

A FEW weeks ago, I received a note requesting me “to define my position and opinions as to two points,—First, as to the measure of faith that constitutes a man a Christian, that is, gives him a claim to the Christian name and privileges,—Secondly, as to the principles of Christian liberty, what are they? how to be applied?” The note closed with informing me, that by complying with this request and giving an answer from the pulpit, I should greatly oblige an “old member of Brattle Street Society.”

As this request, while its topic is important, is one which every parishioner is at liberty to make of his clergyman, and in concealing his name while so doing, may be guided by motives undeserving of censure and such as ought not to lead to a refusal of his request, I shall now proceed to comply with it,

though I violate thereby a good rule respecting anonymous communications, which, though they may not always be meanly malicious in their character, always want those qualities of openness and independence, which, generally, can alone make them worthy of consideration. I can hardly suppose, however, that any old member of Brattle Street Society wishes this request complied with simply for his own information; because every such member, every one at all acquainted with the history of this Church, or who has attended any considerable time upon its past or present ministrations, being fully aware of the platform upon which it was originally placed, and which its ministers, I believe, have always been zealous to maintain, can have little doubt as to the views upon the questions proposed, which have here been commonly advocated and approved. From its institution, near a century and a half ago, until now, it has been distinguished for independence, liberality, and conservatism. These three important qualities of all right action, but especially of all church, or associated religious action, have been made in a remarkable degree to mingle and harmonize in the action of this Church. It has always acted independently, and refused to subject itself either to the direct or indirect control of others. It has always had the wisdom to think for itself, and to determine its own course without seeking the guidance, or submitting to the interference, or waiting for the example of others.

This Church was established also upon principles of Christian liberality. Its action, both in respect to the temporalities that pertain to religion, and in spiritual matters, has always been marked by a broad and comprehensive charity. I look in vain in its records for any thing to indicate that a sectarian, exclusive, or denunciatory spirit ever influenced its members. It has never sought to put fetters upon the utterance of its pulpit, or the consciences of its members. It has always been ready to accord, nay, it has encouraged its ministers in the free and generous action of their minds in the pursuit of truth, in the investigation of that boundless field for inquiry which the Bible opens to human thought, and in the application, of what they might there discover, to individual character and the social condition of the community.

But with this independence and liberality there has always mingled a spirit of moderation and conservatism. Within the field which the Bible opens, it has always favored the wise and diligent pursuit of truth; but has never encouraged rash speculation or wanton innovation. It has never countenanced those, who were disposed to turn from the waters of Jordan to the rivers of Egypt, or Greece, or Rome, or who contended that these streams were from the same sources and of equal purity and excellence. Several times since its establishment, a speculative and sceptical spirit has been abroad in the world, attacking the foundations of our faith; and at all

these periods this Church has stood firm for the Scriptures as the hope of the world, the great fountain of religious knowledge, and been zealous for Jesus Christ as “the way, the truth, and the life.”

But it is not necessary for me to pursue these remarks. Let us come to the first question I am requested to answer, viz. What measure of faith constitutes a man a Christian, i. e. gives him a claim to the Christian name and privileges?—It is evident that this question is limited by the last clause. The inquiry is not what measure of faith makes a man a real Christian, a Christian in deed and in truth, gives him a Christian character. We all know that the thing which does that, is that faith of the heart which is unto righteousness, which reaches the conscience, binds the affections to duty, and imbues the whole inward and outward life of the soul with the spirit of Christ. But the question is, what measure of faith gives a right or a claim to be ranked among Christian believers, to be classed under the general name of Christian?

To define my own position and opinions upon this point, which is what I am desired to do, I must institute a preliminary inquiry. To determine what constitutes a man a Christian, I must determine what Christianity is. And in reply to this inquiry, what is Christianity? I should say, as would many others, Christianity is a religion of facts. It is a positive and authoritative revelation, resting upon facts that are incontrovertibly true. This is the one

great, comprehensive definition of Christianity. It is not a theory of abstract principles logically arranged and proved. It is not an eclectic system of ethics, a selection of the best parts of all systems, the essence of truth, found after the "wisdom of all time" has been carried through a process of distillation in the brain of some extraordinary religious genius. Nor is it a moral rule we may follow simply because we think it good, and recommend to the adoption of others for the same reason. Christianity is not a recommendation, but a command. While it rebukes us for not being more faithful to our powers, for "not judging of ourselves that which is right," it graciously points out to us what the *right is*, and then says "this do and thou shalt live." It speaks with authority; and with us its authority rests upon its facts. By these, and these chiefly, does it make its appeal to the affections; from these, and these chiefly, does it derive its power to bind the conscience and control the conduct. Disprove these facts, and Christianity is no longer entitled to our serious regard as a revelation. It loses its authority. Prove them, establish them, and the power and authority of God are given to the spiritual truths, the moral principles and influences, which in the Gospels are inseparably associated with these facts, and often flow as necessary consequences from them.

The argument, which has been so often and so ably conducted, elaborate in its details, yet in my judgment, perfectly clear and conclusive in its re-

sult, by which it is proved that these facts are to be relied upon, that Christianity, that the New Testament is historically true, this argument I do not consider myself called upon in the present instance to set forth. It is not necessary, in answering the question proposed, to go into it. Nevertheless as it has become quite common of late years, for some to say "they have not much respect for historical Christianity, nor much faith in it," or to use language implying this, and implying also something like a sneer, as though they, who have this respect and this faith, must be persons of feeble minds, altogether unacquainted with spiritual Christianity, I may be permitted to glance for a moment at the main objection urged against historical Christianity, and say a word about the close and inseparable connexion existing between historical and spiritual Christianity, in illustration of the fact, that in proving the truth of the former, that is, the facts of the New Testament, the ultimate appeal is made to the same principles of our moral nature, that are addressed in asserting the truth of the moral teachings of the New Testament, the spiritual realities of religion.

The objection to placing Christianity upon its historical foundation, or the objection to historical Christianity, as it is termed, is that it rests upon the critical argument in support of the genuineness and authenticity of the several portions of the New Testament record. This argument, it is contended, is so recondite, requiring a knowledge so wide in its

range, so various in its elements, so rigidly exact in its inductions, that few have leisure and ability to conduct it for themselves, and a majority even of the educated and intelligent cannot be made fully to understand and appreciate it. Admitting this objection to be well founded, what does it amount to? What does it prove? Simply this, that Christianity is on the same platform, in the same circle with all other knowledge. It is an objection that may be urged with equal force against all that most of us know, against our knowledge even of many of those facts and principles of abstract or physical science, upon which we rely with the utmost confidence, and by which thousands of us daily guide our business and conduct. A knowledge of these facts is often as essential to our temporal comfort and preservation, as a knowledge of Christianity is to our moral and spiritual wellbeing, yet the proofs of these facts, especially if we would attain to unquestionable certainty in respect to them, are recondite, requiring those who would completely master them in every separate step and in all their ramifications, to devote their lives to the pursuit and give to it the powers of a severely disciplined mind.

But it does not follow that this knowledge is of no value because its proofs are recondite; or, in respect to Christianity, that such a summary of these proofs, such a general view of the argument cannot be presented, as shall make it fully intelligible to the uneducated, so that no person shall feel any diffi-

culty in yielding his absolute assent to it. You cannot, at least you do not go into a strict and rigid analysis of the entire mass of matter that enters into the historical argument, into a thorough personal investigation and mastery of every particular step, every minute circumstance, by which it is at last placed beyond a reasonable doubt that the Gospel, the New Testament record is history, true history. Yet the essential points in this investigation you can easily comprehend. You can see the chain of the argument, and see that it is a strong chain, though you cannot, or do not go into a minute consideration of every thing that forms and proves the strength of each separate link. One could go into a Sunday school, and make the historical argument intelligible and conclusive to the assembled children. But they would receive it on authority, it is said, and that is bad. But is this bad? I have received portions of it on authority; so have you and I received many things on authority, that are none the less certain, none the less worthy of being believed, and none the less valuable and important to us, because so received. One would think, from looking into the writings of some people, that believing on authority was a terrible thing, an unpardonable sin, a mental weakness and a moral wrong always to be avoided. But it cannot always be avoided. Authority enters more or less into all our knowledge and belief. And what is believing on authority? Why in most cases,

it is simply another mode of saying, that you assent to the results of the collected wisdom and investigations of the whole world. I believe on authority that there is such a place as the Sandwich Islands,—that is, I have seen some persons who say they have been there, I know that others send their ships and goods there, and receive returns; and I am satisfied that in this world, where so many are running to and fro, surveying, inspecting and spying out every nook and corner of the earth, if there were no such place, some voyager or traveller would, long ere this, have found it out and successfully proved it. So one believes on authority in the historical truth of Christianity, the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament records,—that is, he knows that some persons, who have most thoroughly and laboriously investigated the whole subject, have come to the conclusion that they are genuine and authentic; and in this world of inquisitiveness and investigation, where thousands of minds are at work, eager upon all subjects, but especially upon religious subjects, to follow to their source the faintest glimmerings of truth, he feels satisfied that if it could be proved, or even rendered probable, that these records are not true, not worthy of reception and credit, it would have been done, successfully and triumphantly done. He knows from all that he sees and hears around him that this has not been done; he knows that every attack upon the genuineness and authenticity of these records has failed of any extensive or per-

manent success, that the most intelligent and learned minds, after fully weighing these attacks, have still clung to their Christian faith, that the Gospel has come out brighter and clearer from every charge brought against it. His "belief on authority," therefore, is merely an assent to the result of the collected wisdom and judgment of the Christian world.

But there is a further answer to this point. Authority, in the sense in which it is here used, has little to do with our Christian faith. Your conviction that Christianity is true does not rest simply upon the opinion or authority of those, who have most laboriously investigated Christian evidences. This authority confirms and supports your faith. You rejoice to know that the fullest investigation leads to a satisfactory result; but your conviction springs mainly from your own moral perception of the true and the genuine in the evangelical record. Even with critics, it is not "the logic of criticism," but rather "the logic of the moral sense" that establishes faith in Christianity. You believe, not on authority, not on the testimony or reasonings of others in behalf of the New Testament, but because your moral sense,—that feeling, not the growth of refinement and cultivation merely, but dwelling in every breast, which with instinctive precision determines what is true to human nature, harmonious, and in all points consistent with itself,—this feeling, when applied as a test or touchstone to the New Testament records, brings home to the mind a conviction, stronger than that

produced by any critical argument, that those records are true, that the Evangelists narrate real events, the actions and discourses of a real person. Many may not be able to compare these records with those, that exhibit the lives and actions of the heroes and sages of antiquity ; but those capable of making this comparison, will acknowledge that all history does not present any one character in colors of reality so fresh and convincing as those, in which Jesus Christ is portrayed in the Gospel narratives ; and those, who cannot make this comparison, feel, and will admit because they feel, that the character of Christ, the more his history is studied, becomes more and more a reality to their minds, attaching to itself fresh reverence and increased faith.

In support of this position, I might go into an analysis of the Gospel history, and of the remarkable features in the character and conduct of our Saviour, to show that it is the perception of the grandeur, the elevation and harmony of this character, a harmony altogether inimitable, that puts beyond doubt the historic reality of the New Testament, and carries with it the conviction of the truth and divine origin of Christianity. But this analysis is not necessary. There is another point that claims attention here. There are those who will acknowledge every thing I have advanced thus far, will admit all that can be said upon the excellence of Christ's character and teachings, will admit the truth and reality of these, but will admit nothing more. They

cannot, they say, and do not receive the supernatural portions of the New Testament. But can they go thus far and no farther? Just at this point is there any ground to stand upon? any ground for an intelligent and consistent Christian faith? I maintain the contrary. I maintain that whoever attempts to stop at this point, though he may at first think he is upon strong ground, will soon find himself upon quicksands, from which he must either recede, or pass on into infidelity and undisguised natural religion. He cannot stand where he is. The history and progress of religious opinions in individuals and communities, I apprehend, satisfactorily prove this. You cannot separate the natural from the supernatural portions of the Gospel history, and preserve the credibility of either. They must stand or fall together. Let any one attempt it, and the experiment, unless his mind be singularly constituted, will convince him that it cannot be done. Let him detach the miraculous portions of the narrative, and he will find that the remaining mutilated portions cannot be so put together, as to retain anything of that air of reality and historic verisimilitude, which now attaches to the whole. The eleventh chapter of John's Gospel has been frequently adduced as an illustration in point. This chapter narrates the sickness, death, and resurrection of Lazarus. Well has it been said, that "a brilliant vividness, as when a sun-beam breaks from between clouds, illumines this unmatched narrative, and rests," it seems to me, with equal

brilliancy, "upon the stupendous miracle and upon the beauty and grace of the scene of domestic sorrow."*

Read this chapter. Follow our Saviour from the time it was announced to him, "Lord; he whom thou lovest is sick," to the moment when, with a voice of mingled tenderness and majesty, he summoned the dead to come forth and was obeyed; and then say, if you can, where is the break in the story, the point of transition from truth to falsehood, from history to fiction. How far will you go along with the writer and receive his narrative? Where will you stop and refuse your assent? At what point does the scene lose its air of reality, and the gestures, language, actions of the persons become unnatural, inconsistent with what precedes or follows? Submit the chapter to the severest ordeal of criticism to discover, if you can, any of that abruptness, harshness, or want of harmony, which could hardly fail to appear, were the narrative a mixture of fact and fable. You look in vain. You cannot determine this point of transition, and are at a loss to decide where your faith shall stop. Without doing violence to all the principles of sound criticism and interpretation, you cannot separate the natural from the supernatural in this narrative, and so present the former that it shall retain any air of reality, any semblance of truth. They stand or fall together. You

* The first of "Taylor's Lectures on Spiritual Christianity," where this whole subject is ably and eloquently discussed.

must set aside the whole narrative as a fiction, or receive the whole as a record of facts.

What cannot be done with this chapter, cannot be done with the whole history. The attempt to prove the ordinary events of the New Testament record true, to be received and accredited as facts, while the extraordinary are fables and incredible, is desperate. The logic of historic and critical evidence, and the logic of the moral sense alike oppose it. For it is a fact, which cannot be disputed or denied, that all those inimitable characteristics of nature and reality, which to our moral perceptions become such irresistible evidences of truth and reality, do not attach simply to the common incidents of the history. They are not found only when our Saviour is exhibited walking in the path of common life, mingling in the customary social intercourse of men. On the contrary, many of the most peculiar, striking and convincing of these characteristics are inseparably connected with the supernatural portions, and are to be found only in those scenes, in which Jesus is exhibited walking in the high and solitary path of divine power and performing miraculous acts of beneficence; so that if we give up these, if we separate and set them aside from the others as incredible, the whole appeal, which the Gospel makes to our moral perception of the true and the beautiful, of what is harmonious and consistent with itself, is destroyed.

[This leads us back to the definition, I have already

given, that Christianity is a religion of facts, a positive and authoritative revelation, resting upon incontrovertible facts. If this be the great comprehensive definition of Christianity, the answer to the question proposed is easy and direct. Whoever assents to this proposition, and receives the Gospel as historically true; whoever, with the Apostle in the text, acknowledges Jesus to be "the Christ," an authoritative "teacher come from God," his master in religious truth and moral duty, in the deep things of the spirit and in the conduct of every day, and goes with reverence to the record of his life and teachings, as to the fountain that can alone supply the spiritual wants of the soul, whoever does this has a right to the Christian name, a claim to have that name conceded to him by others, though his creed, his interpretation of these records, and the doctrines he deduces from them differ widely from theirs. This I conceive to be the broad and distinctive foundation of Christian faith. All who stand upon this foundation I am ready to acknowledge as Christians. Let their creed be what it may, if they go to the teachings of Christ, to the New Testament as a record of facts, for authority and proof to establish and sustain that creed, I call them Christians, embraced among the disciples of Christ. More than this I am not disposed to demand, less than this I dare not concede as sufficient. If a man merely bow to Christ as an extraordinary religious genius, whose character, though distinguished for its moral elevation

and purity, was yet marked, he thinks, by some inconsistencies and imperfections, which, however, he is willing to overlook as, "considering the youth of the man, very venial errors," if he does not regard him as invested with any direct divine authority, as no more inspired than we all may be, "if we will pay the price," if he place Jesus Christ and the Scriptures upon the same platform with Plato and Socrates and their writings, and receives and approves his instruction simply because he thinks them pure and good, the best he finds, if this is the extent of his faith and acknowledgments, I am not prepared to give such latitude to the appellation of Christian, so to destroy all meaning and force in it, as to apply it to him. Christianity is either a direct divine revelation, or it is not. It is historically true, or historically false. If it be a divine revelation, historically true, it must be admitted to demand a more respectful acknowledgment, than simply that its system of ethics is pure and its author an extraordinary religious genius; and if a man deem it historically false, and no more directly a revelation than the teachings of all eminently gifted minds are a revelation, there seems to me neither reason nor propriety in his claiming to be, or wishing to be called a Christian believer.

This then is my position. I object not to man's lofty speculations and earnest inquiries after truth. I am satisfied also that Christianity is congenial with all the higher and holier workings of the human intellect, and that between it, rightly understood and

interpreted, and all the exercises and speculations of a sound reason, there is and can be no manner of incompatibility. Still I contend that the Gospel is ever to be studied as a message, a direct and special communication from God; and whoever will not concede to Jesus Christ and the New Testament an *authority* different from and infinitely above and beyond what he concedes to any other book or teacher, whoever does not receive Christianity as something revealed by the express intention and special inspiration of the Deity, he seems to me to be wanting in the very foundation of Christian faith. If we give up this idea of authority, special inspiration, supernatural interposition on the part of the Deity in the Gospel message, we give up all that makes Christianity a revelation, all that gives to it any value and efficacy. I can find very good morality, very sound and wise precepts and principles of living, in the writings of ancient and modern philosophers. I can gather some idea of God, some guiding and comforting conceptions of the Deity from his works. I find an intimation of immortality and future accountability in the soul, in the grandeur and ever growing developement of its faculties, in the authority of its conscience, in the yearnings of its affections and aspirations, and I find this intimation supported by the unequal allotments, the uncertain retributions, the evidently imperfect, disciplinary, preparatory character of the present life. But what I want, what we all want, is assurance, con-

firmation, authority, on these points of such deep moment to us. I do not look for new truths in Christianity,—that is, for things absolutely unheard of, unconceived of before; widely different from, or directly opposed to that great revelation, indistinctly uttered by nature in her glorious works, and by the human heart in its dictates and aspirations. What I look for is a re-utterance, a confirmation of this revelation, an assurance, on direct divine authority, of “those truths about which human reason in its highest and purest action can only argue, and in relation to which, in its most satisfactory efforts it can only attain to a conjecture, not a demonstration, awaken a hope not establish a faith.” This is what I look for in Christianity; and if I find not this, I find nothing of any great satisfaction to me. If when Christ says, “I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,” he is to be considered as simply uttering the convictions of his own mind upon the immortality of the soul, the result, and simply the result of his own meditations and thoughts, his words are nothing to me. Unless he is to be considered as speaking with authority, as one specially endowed and sent of God to make this declaration, to re-utter and confirm this great hope of the soul, his words are no more, they are not so much to me, as Plato’s ingenious argument upon the same subject. If a man set aside from Christianity this idea of authority and special interposition, if, as I have said, he regard the teachings and

declarations of Jesus as a revelation only in the sense in which the teachings of all eminently great and gifted minds are a revelation, I see not how he can claim, or be admitted to be a Christian, no matter how strong may be his faith in the substance, the main truths which Christ taught. There are many professed Deists, many Mahommedans, and some Pagans who have equally strong faith in them. *Christian* faith and the assumption of the *Christian* name, imply a belief, founded upon the historical truth of the New Testament *that Jesus is the Christ*,—that is, the sent, the anointed, the expressly commissioned and appointed of God, in a peculiar and authoritative sense, his messenger.

The position and argument, which I have thus attempted to offer, may be made more plain by a simple illustration. We have in this country a constitution, by which we are united and made a federal nation. There are different modes of interpreting this constitution, and different parties formed according as men interpret its powers and purposes—still all who acknowledge its authority, go to it as the fountain of their rights, duties and privileges, and aim to conform to it, are recognized as American citizens, and have a right to the name and privileges of American citizenship. But if a man refuse to acknowledge its authority, if he doubts about the history of its formation and adoption, and thinks a good deal of it has been added since, that some of its provisions are weak and ridiculous, and not

to be heeded, if he declares that he will not heed it, that he will be guided by his own notions of what it is civilly right and lawful for him to do, independently of the provisions of this constitution—why then he has no right or claim, strictly speaking, to the name of an American citizen, because he refuses to acknowledge that which is the charter and foundation of this name. He may be a very good man and a great friend of liberty. Living in a community protected and upheld by this constitution, he would indirectly share in its protection and benefits; but he could not hold office under it, and to act consistently with his declaration, ought not to vote under it, or claim any civil right, privilege, or security by virtue of it. So as Christians we have a constitution, as it were, in the New Testament. There are different modes of interpreting this book, and different sects and denominations formed, according as men interpret it and deduce their doctrines from it. Whoever acknowledges this book as authority, goes to it as the fountain of truth, for guidance, comfort and hope, he has a right to the name and privileges of a Christian. But if he refuse to acknowledge the authority of this constitution, this book, if he doubts or denies its authenticity and genuineness, and thinks a good deal of it is spurious, absurd fables, and says he has a higher and more authoritative revelation in his own soul, by which he will be guided without regard to the New Testament, why then he ceases to be a Christ-

ian, to have any claim to the Christian name, because he refuses to acknowledge that which is the charter and foundation of that name. He may be a good man, a religious man, a friend to piety and virtue. Living in a Christian community he would breathe morally a Christian atmosphere, and share in the influences and blessings of the Christian religion, but he has no more claim, I conceive, to call himself Christian, than one would have to call himself a Mahomedan, because he acknowledged Mahomet to be a "profound religious genius," and admitted that there is much truth mixed up with a great deal of folly and error in the Koran.

But it may be asked, is not this bigotted, uncharitable, exclusive? Does it not conflict with those principles of Christian liberty, for which we have been strenuous advocates? It may be said, "Trinitarians deny us the Christian name and withhold from us fellowship and sympathy, because we do not believe the Trinity and some other doctrines, which they deem essential parts of the Gospel. We think this uncharitable and exclusive, and have often condemned it in good set terms as illiberal. Do we not act upon the same principles of infallibility, and make ourselves obnoxious to the same charge of exclusiveness and a want of charity, if we refuse the Christian name to those who deny something that we deem essential, viz:—the miracles, yet declare their faith in the substance of Christ's teachings, and receive his instructions as the guide of their lives?"

This is the point, I have reason to know,* it was intended I should meet and discuss under the second question proposed to me, viz: The principles of Christian liberty, what are they? how to be applied? As I am not disposed to plead guilty to the charge of bigotry or intolerance, I trust it will appear, from the remarks I am now to offer in reply to this question, that there is nothing of exclusiveness in the position assumed, except so far as Christianity itself is exclusive. It was a charge early brought against Christianity, that it was exclusive and intolerant, and in this respect less worthy of our regard, than the Paganism it displaced from the Roman world, which readily admitted the introduction of new gods into its temples, and with these new objects, new forms and modes of worship. But if Christianity be what it claims to be, if it be true, if it be a direct divine revelation, it must be exclusive. It cannot walk hand in hand, side by side with other religions. It must and does, from the very nature of the case, pronounce other religions either false or defective, and refuse to recognize as its disciples and receive to its fellowship those, who do not acknowledge its claims as a direct revelation in the way and to the extent itself sets forth those claims. There is a wide difference between withholding the Christian name from one who, denies the supernatural

*The second sermon commences with the previous paragraph. During the week, that intervened between the delivery of the sermons, I received a note, in which this point was distinctly stated in the words quoted above.

character of the Christian revelation, and withholding it from one, who admitting that character, and the authenticity of the New Testament record, differs from us in interpreting it.

It will be perceived, though perhaps it was not observed, and was not intended by my correspondent, that his question is limited somewhat by the use of the term Christian. The question is not what are the principles of *religious* liberty and how are they to be applied, but what are the principles of *Christian* liberty and how are they to be applied? and the one is somewhat narrower and more limited than the other. The former question involves the consideration of man's relations to the community, or the laws and enactments respecting religious faith and worship civil government may impose. The other, though under some circumstances it may embrace these topics, involves rather the consideration of man's relations to the Christian church, and the requirements this body may make of the individual. The first and more general question has, in this country, been long since settled upon the broadest grounds. With us *church* and *state* have been completely severed, and the utmost liberty, compatible with public safety, allowed to the individual to adopt and enjoy what religious faith he chooses. We do not, indeed, sanction, encourage and protect irreligion, or no religion. If a man laugh at all religion as a farce, at the Great Object of it as nought, a thing of the imagination,—if the sum total of his creed be

a negation, a denial of the existence of God, the intelligent and controlling First Cause, if the main object of his life be to corrupt by precept and example the principles of others, and undermine their faith in this great truth, that lies at the foundation of the peace and stability of society,—why then, in this Commonwealth at least, we regard him as a public nuisance, an evil doer, and treat him accordingly. But any thing short of this, any and every kind of religion is unmolested by the civil government. Christianity is, indeed, more or less recognised as true in the official acts of our magistrates and the proceedings of our legislatures, and its influences pervade somewhat our laws. But this is all. If a man were to profess himself a Hindoo, or a follower of Mahomet, the government would take no cognizance of the fact. There is no law to interfere with his faith, or prevent his worshipping according to its dictates. His faith would not legally deprive him of any civil privileges, nor be, through any legal or constitutional provision, a bar to his eligibility to office. So far then as respects that external liberty, as it is sometimes called, that entire independence and severance of religion from government, which Christianity, or the individual may demand, it is here established in the broadest, most unqualified manner. While the government is permitted to call to its aid the influences and spirit of religion, it is not permitted to define and dictate the articles its citizens shall believe, or the errors they shall shun. This is well, and so

far as Christianity is concerned, is doubtless to be approved. Whatever advantage other religions may have derived from direct conjunction with the state, Christianity certainly has never been benefitted by an intimate connexion with or dependence upon the civil power. A divine, authoritative revelation, as it is, addressed to the intellect, the inner heart and conscience of every individual, the interference of government is not needed to give it efficacy or power. Would it tell men what to believe? Christ has done this in his discourses. Would it tell them what to practice? Christ has done this in his precepts. Would it tell them how to worship? More than eighteen centuries ago, Christ laid down a rule, "ye shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth," and it does not become his disciples to learn or adopt another. Jesus Christ was not unqualified for his work, or faithless in his duty; nor is the New Testament inadequate to the wants of the soul. All that the soul needs of truth and guidance in religion, all that is necessary to be believed or obeyed, every man will find in the New Testament, and it does not require an act of legislation to make it more clear, or give it more authority. As no one can here complain of any religious oppression in the government, of any civil enactments or disabilities interfering with his faith and worship, there is no need of discussing the general principles of religious liberty. They are well understood and established.

Let us come then to the subject as it is narrowed

down by the question, and subsequent explanation of the proposer. What are the principles of *Christian* liberty? Is it a violation of these principles to refuse the Christian name to one, who denies the main facts of the New Testament, the supernatural character of Christianity, but receives the substance of what Christ taught as true, and endeavors to live by it? This question involves another. Is there, or is there not, any line of demarcation between Christian believers and those who are not Christian believers? Of course there can be but one answer to this latter question. There is somewhere some such line of demarcation. All the world are not Christian believers, for multitudes in the world have never heard of the name of Christ. There is, there must be, somewhere a line, a principle separating those who are, and those who are not, Christian believers. Those who are on one side of this line have a claim to the Christian name; those who are on the other have not a claim to it. This point being settled, I ask any one to draw and define this line, to say where it cuts. What is it that separates those who are from those who are not Christian believers? Is it answered, "the substance of faith is faith,—whoever therefore believes the substance of what Christ taught to be true, receives and obeys it because he believes it to be true, whoever cultivates the spirit of Christ, and looks with reverence and admiration to his character as the living illustration of his teachings, the pattern of that excellence to which human

nature should aspire, he has a claim to the name and privileges of a Christian, though he do not believe the supernatural facts connected with Christianity in the record of the New Testament?" To this I reply, the line of demarcation, thus laid down, is not in my judgment the true one, chiefly for two reasons. First, because it includes too many. It is not the line of demarcation, which the common sense of Christendom has always made, and which many, claiming to believe in the substance of what Christ taught, have made for themselves. The substance of what Christ taught has been floating in men's minds, apprehended with greater or less distinctness, held to, with stronger or weaker faith, ever since man was created. We are not to look in a revelation, as I have already remarked, for new truths,—truths that are absolutely and entirely novel to the human mind, never before thought of and inquired about. A divine revelation would of course be adapted to the powers, capacities and wants of the human mind, would relate to subjects upon which, though objects of human thought, the human mind had tasked itself in vain to arrive at satisfactory conclusions. The great themes of the Christian revelation, the character and government of God, the duty and the destiny of man, have ever in every age and country been matter of deep investigation, of earnest thought and inquiry, and the substance of what Christ teaches upon these points has been and is now received by many, who, while they acknowledge the moral pu-

rity and excellence of his teachings and character, refuse to be called by his name, or baptized into the Christian faith. This line includes too many. It would embrace a large portion of the world, and bestow the name of Christian upon all the most noted deistical writers of the last three centuries.

But I pass by this, to ask your attention to my second and main objection. It is said, whoever receives as true the substance of what Christ taught, and admires and reverences his character as the pattern and guide, the great example for the world, is to be considered a Christian, though he do not receive the supernatural facts connected with Christianity in the record of the New Testament. I ask, where do we get at the substance of what Christ taught? Where do we find it? Where do we find the portraiture of his character? Whence do we derive that knowledge and those conceptions of his character, which are to fill us with faith and reverence, awaken his spirit in the soul, and make it aspire to imitate and resemble him? It would be answered, I suppose,—it is the only answer that can be made,—from the New Testament. It is there his teachings are recorded and his character portrayed.

But upon the principle under consideration, that the supernatural portions of the New Testament are to be set aside as incredible, unreal, false, how, with any certainty or assurance to be relied upon, are we to find the teachings and character of Christ presented and portrayed in this volume? This principle

throws doubt and disparagement upon the record, declares it not to be genuine and authentic, a true and simple history of Jesus Christ; how then shall I determine and believe any portion of it to be true? How shall I be assured that the character of Christ has not been falsely portrayed, as well as the acts of Christ inaccurately reported? Nay, how can I separate the character from the acts, or form any just, life-giving conceptions of the character, while I doubt or disbelieve very many, if not most of the acts by and through which that character is exhibited and presented to my faith? How shall I be assured that I have the substance of what Christ taught? What is to satisfy me that his moral instructions, his glorious and solemn declarations upon the great themes of man's duty and destiny have not been incorrectly recorded, as well as the events of his life and history falsely described? There is nothing that can satisfy me upon these points. Inextricable confusion, suspicion and doubt are thrown over the whole subject. If we cannot go to the New Testament as a record genuine and authentic of facts, we cannot go to it with any confidence whatever. We can have no assurance that we have given us there the substance of what Christ taught, or that such a character as Christ's was ever exhibited. This character may have been a creation of the imagination, as well as the supernatural scenes and events under which it is principally described and exhibited. It may never have had a

real existence ; and just in proportion as we destroy its reality, render it possible or probable that it was a portraiture drawn from human conceptions of excellence and not from real life, we destroy its moral power, its appeal to the affections, its control of the conscience. Now we do render this not only possible but probable, if we set aside the supernatural portions of the New Testament. Indeed we hardly leave any character to be ascertained, revered, or studied. For a man to say he believes in the substance of what Christ taught, and receives it as taught by him, that he has a high admiration and reverence for his character, while at the same time he denies or disbelieves many of the circumstances under which these instructions were delivered, and many of the facts and events by which this character was exhibited, seems to me an utterly confused and contradictory assertion. Were a man to say he had the highest reverence for the character of Washington, that he received the substance of his life and writings as embraced in the volumes collected and published by Mr. Sparks, but that he set aside all accounts relating to the revolutionary war as unreal and fabulous, we should deem it, to say the least, a very absurd declaration. It is impossible to separate the life of Washington from the revolutionary war, or to form a just conception of his character, independently of the events connected with that struggle. It is equally impossible to separate the life of Christ from the supernatural events narrated in the New Testa-

ment, or to form any just conception of his character independently of those events.

I object, therefore, to this line of demarcation for these two reasons; first, it includes too many, and secondly, it overturns the foundations of faith. That cannot be the true and just principle, separating the Christian believer from one who is *not* a Christian believer, which throws confusion and uncertainty over the whole subject of the Christian religion. I ask, therefore, for another line of demarcation. Shall we go to the opposite extreme and say with the Papists, that all who do not receive their faith from the Holy Father at Rome, and conform to the creed and worship he claims authority to establish, are without the pale of Christian belief? Or shall we side with the Episcopalians, that they only are the Holy Apostolic Church, and that their body alone embraces true Christian believers? Or with the Baptists, that immersion is the distinctive sign and mark of a Christian believer? Or with the Presbyterians, that the five points of Calvinism are the essential points of the gospel, that whoever does not hold to them has another gospel, not found in the New Testament? Or with the Trinitarian Congregationalist, that whoever does not regard Christ as the infinite Jehovah, is not on Christian ground? I object to these lines of demarcation. These are distinctions *in*, not *of* Christianity. They are not the distinctions that separate Christianity from other religions, and Christian believers from those who are

not Christian believers. These are distinctions that may exist, questions about which there may be differences of opinion among those, who receive with equal authority the Apostolic record and testimony. This record and testimony covers this ground,—that Jesus lived, taught, wrought miracles, died, rose again and ascended into Heaven. Now this record is equally true, and equally the foundation of Christianity, whatever opinion we adopt as to the best mode of church organization, the right method of administering ordinances, the nature of man, or the nature of Christ, or the manner and degree of his union with the Father. There always have been, and there probably always will be, the widest differences of opinion upon many of these points. But this would be of no consequence, could these things be kept in their proper position and estimated at their just importance. The question, which is vital to Christianity, is not whether the Pope is Christ's vicar and the Church of Rome infallible; it is not whether the Episcopal is the Holy Apostolic Church, its bishops descended by an unbroken succession from the Apostles, and having therefore the sole right to ordain ministers of the gospel, and administer Christian ordinances; it is not whether immersion is the only acceptable form of baptism, or whether Christ be God, or man totally depraved. No! The question, which is vital to Christianity, is whether the Apostolic testimony be true or false,—whether God did, or did not, raise up Jesus of Nazareth, and

send him to enlighten, bless and save the world, as the Evangelists have testified. This is the vital question ; here is the line of demarcation ; here is the grand foundation of Christianity. He who stands upon this ground is a Christian believer. He who does not stand upon this ground is not a Christian believer, and his complaint of bigotry and exclusiveness, because the Christian name is denied him, is as unfounded as would be a complaint on the part of any of us, that we have not been recognized as Swedenborgians, because we perceive much truth in the substance of that person's teachings and admire the excellence of his character, but deny that any special inspiration or supernatural gifts were accorded to him.

My brief answer then to the question, what is Christian liberty ? is it is liberty to be a Christian. It is liberty to receive the facts of the Apostolic record and testimony. It is liberty to go to the New Testament as a genuine and authentic history of the teachings, conduct and character of Christ, and according to the best lights of reason, history and criticism, interpret that record, and gather and deduce from it such truths and doctrines, as such interpretation seems to the individual to sustain and establish. It is liberty therefore to be a Catholic, if one thinks he finds, in the teachings of Christ and his Apostles, enough to sustain the pretensions of the Catholic church. It is liberty to be an Episcopalian, if one thinks that the doctrines and administration of

that church are those Christ and his Apostles established. It is liberty to be a Baptist, if one finds there that which convinces him that immersion is the great sign of sanctification and redemption. It is liberty to be a Trinitarian, if one finds there that which satisfies him that the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed truth. It is liberty to be an Unitarian, if one finds there that which makes him believe that the Trinity is not true, and that Christ the Son is inferior to and dependent upon God the Father. It is liberty to hold any opinions and truths, and to be earnest and zealous in their advocacy, which one believes that book, rightly interpreted, establishes. It is *not* liberty to disparage the record, to deny its most momentous facts and set them aside as fables, and yet claim to believe in a religion, of which we can have and can procure no satisfactory knowledge, save from that record. It is *not* liberty to call Jesus Lord, and yet maintain that he had no special inspiration, that he spake with no more authority than that which the bare annunciation of truth gives to every one that utters it, that he did not works which no man could do save God were with him in the world,—and thus make, either him an impostor, or the Evangelists and Apostles false witnesses and participators in a pious fraud.

The application of this principle and its operation are too obvious to need to be presented in detail. It would not destroy, what indeed cannot be destroyed, individual or sectarian differences of opin-

ion. But it places all sects upon the same level, the same platform. It allows to each its right of organization, the right to form its own creed, and to uphold and administer what it deems scriptural truth in such way, by such ministrations and institutions, as it deems scriptural. If fully carried out and acted upon, it would take from each sect, not its exclusiveness, for, to a certain extent, that is the essential element of a sect, but its arrogance and pretension. It would mingle more of candor, modesty and charity with the zeal of all sects, and bring them, not to agree in doctrine, but to agree to differ without indulging in wrath, bitterness, evil speaking one of another.

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REJECTED ARTICLE,

IN REPLY TO

PARKER'S REVIEW

OF

"HENNELL ON THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY."

OFFERED FIRST TO THE DIAL;

THEN TO THE

CHRISTIAN EXAMINER.

~~~~~  
BY A UNITARIAN MINISTER.

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BOSTON:

BENJAMIN H. GREENE.

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CLARK

[FOR THE DIAL.]

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It is time for thee, Lord, to work ; for they have made void thy law. —  
PSALM CXIX. 126.

AN Article appeared in the last (Oct.) number of the Dial which demands more consideration than the minds of most readers would bestow. It was the leading article, and purported to be a review of "Hennell on the Origin of Christianity." The signature was "P."

It has been thought, by some, that the Article referred to is open to the charge of clear and unequivocal *Infidelity*. It is on this account that its examination is proposed, — should the professedly free spirit of the Dial give space and opportunity.

That there may be no misunderstanding of terms, it may be well to state the sense in which the word *Infidelity* is used — to wit — *The rejection of Christianity as a miraculous and authoritative revelation from God to man.* It may also be well to state, that while the Article itself is so regarded, no question is made but that its Author verily thought he was doing God service. With these friendly feelings, as well as from a deep and prayerful sense of duty, let issue be joined, and God maintain the right.

There appears to be evidence of expectation that the Article would be regarded in an unfavorable light, and of a desire to avoid standing in that light, except by proxy. The foreign Author is made to bear the "head and front" of the offence; while, but for a domestic hand, the offence, to us at least, would not have come. Hennell is made the sheath under whose cover the incisory point is introduced; but another's hand is upon its haft, and directs the execution. Whenever the course of remark would seem to be unwelcome to the Christian public, this foreign scape-goat, with one wide bound, bears the offence beyond the great waters and out of sight. There are also indefinite expressions of dissent, and large and positive ones of commendation, leaving open an apparent door of escape, while in reality those of commendation have effectually closed it.

Under these circumstances it is necessary, in order to bring out whatever evidence of Infidelity the Article may be thought to contain, to refer not only to the remarks of the Reviewer, but to such of those of his Author as are put forth under his approval and commendation.

In the introductory remarks (pp. 139 and 140) it is said that—"some in high theological place do not hesitate to say that mythical stories run through the New Testament \* \* \* that the early apostles were deceived in fancying the world was soon to end in their time; that even in the Gospels there are things which cannot be credited" \* \* that "some grave men in New England, of undoubted soundness in the faith, teach that the angel, who delivered Peter from the prison, was a man with a bag of money to bribe the jailor" \* \* \* of "the Old Testament—that Moses wrote no part of it; that its miracles are false; its Psalms but good devotional poetry; and its prophets were but pious and noble-minded men, who had no more of miraculous inspiration than Malchus and Cassandra and Tiresias. These admissions they make from love of truth,



and out of regard to the letter of the New Testament ; for they are willing to save the most valuable by losing the inferior part."

In this quotation it is plainly said — "these admissions they make from love of truth ;" — admissions that the miracles of the Old Testament are false, and its prophets no more inspired than certain heathen who are named ; that its Psalms are but good devotional poetry, and that Moses wrote no part of the Pentateuch. Does not this sustain the charge of Infidelity, so far as the *Old Testament* is concerned ? Is it not rejected as a miraculous and authoritative revelation from God to man ?

But the remark — "these admissions they make from a love of truth, &c." — justly covers the remarks that leave the New Testament as matter of mythical stories, fancies of deceived apostles, and containing things not to be credited. But it is not necessary to press the above quotation in regard to the New Testament. Other, and perhaps more directly infidel sentiments, as they seem to us, are too sadly numerous to render this of further account.

Mr. Hennell is introduced (p. 140) with strong commendation. "He is, we are told, a merchant of London, who has found time to make the requisite research into ancient and modern writers and produce *this new and valuable treatise on the origin of Christianity.*" Such the commendation, while in the same paragraph it is thought necessary to say — "He wishes his book to be considered as employed in the real service of Christianity, *rather than an attack upon it.*" The first extract of any length from this commended treatise (p. 142 et seq.) is intended to strike at the root of the matter, by accounting for the origin of Christianity in some other way than by miraculous and authoritative revelation from God. If the idea could be lodged in the minds of the readers of the Article and of the readers of the Author under its review, that the Essenes had

lived out most fully and perfectly all that Christianity reveals and requires, then all that Jesus taught would be accounted for at once as borrowed from the Essenes. In reply to this indirect and covert blow at the very origin of Christianity, it may be sufficient to remark, that the extract from Hennell is by him quoted from one, who with his nation, was an enemy to Jesus; and even then had the blood of the crucified resting upon him, as he wrote.

In following the author, who, "with the exceptions herein after excepted," is commended, we are told (pp. 144 and 145) that — "He considers John the Baptist an enthusiastic Essene," — that "among his followers was a Gallilean named Jesus, the *son of Joseph*, a carpenter," — that "Jesus determined to imitate Moses by *assuming the character of the Messiah*," — that "the preaching of John raised him from the obscurity of a carpenter of Nazareth, and he then began to preach the kingdom of Heaven, which was quite as much political as spiritual."

From this last idea of the author concerning a politico-spiritual heaven, there is dissent; but that dissent is in terms that commended whatever else may follow — to wit, — "This we think is one of the weakest parts of the book, and wonder how a writer, *so clear-headed and free from prejudice*, should arrive at this conclusion."

With the above dissent as to the point specified, it is said — "But to proceed. Rude men would suppose a man of great spiritual power must command nature as well as man; Jesus himself might share the opinion; therefore, when the multitude urged him to heal their diseases, he spoke the word, and their confidence in his power, in some cases, effected a cure. In some an authoritative word might effect a momentary calm, or the excitement of the patient produce the appearance of recovery. The story would be enlarged in passing from mouth to mouth, and the reputation of Jesus, as a miracle-worker, soon be established."

Deducting from the above quotations all from which dissent is expressed, and leaving only what is commended in the foreign Author and what is put forth as the Reviewer's own, we have in Jesus a *son of Joseph*, a mere *assumer of Messiahship*, and *destitute of miraculous power, except what he owed to the rudeness, weakness, or excitement of those around him*. Does not this prove the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and of Christianity as a miraculous and authoritative revelation from God to man?

But this is but a beginning among the proofs of infidelity which the Article seems to us to contain. The next dash of the pen converts the resurrection into a trick played off by Joseph, and his accomplice in the trick into an angel first, then into two, and finally into Jesus himself. The language is as follows: — "After his burial in the tomb and garden, Mr. Hennell thinks Joseph feared that trouble might befall him for his connexion with Jesus, and therefore removed the body from the tomb, or that part of it where it had been first placed; and directed the agent, who remained in charge of the open sepulchre, to inform the visitants that Jesus was not there, but they should behold him in Galilee. The message was first given to Mary Magdalene, and the occurrence was at length converted into the appearance of an angel, of two angels, and finally of Jesus himself." (pp. 145 and 146.)

Need it be asked if the making of the Messiahship of Jesus an assumption, his miracles moonshine, and his resurrection a trick, be *Infidelity*?

Should it here be said that the extract concerning the resurrection shows on the face of it that it is Mr. Hennell's, let me point to the Reviewer's own unequivocal endorsement of it.

Page 153 reads as follows: — "In ch. vii. he (Hennell) examines the accounts of the resurrection and ascension of Christ with much ingenuity, patience and candor, *as it*

*seems to us*, and comes to the conclusion we have already stated. *Perhaps it is the most valuable chapter in the whole treatise.*"

Now "the conclusion already stated" must refer to the passage cited from pp. 145 and 146, inasmuch as that is the only passage in which the subject is previously brought up. And that conclusion is that Joseph smuggled away the body, and of course that the resurrection was a fiction.

Having already had before us some views in regard to prophecy,\* we will pass over remarks and quotations on that point, also the chapter "on the character, views and doctrine of Christ," inasmuch as it is spoken of with dissent, and as repulsive. But the last chapter is spoken of in these terms: (p. 156) "The last chapter, entitled 'Concluding Reflections,' is one of great beauty and richness of thought and sentiment." Under this commendation the following specimen of the extracts given, may perhaps suffice for our purpose:

"When a higher office (p. 157) is claimed for Christ, that of a messenger accredited from God by a supernatural birth, miraculous works, a resurrection, and an ascension, we may reasonably expect equal strength of evidence. But how stands the case? The four Gospels, on these points, are *not* confirmed by testimony out of the Church, disagree with each other, and contain relations contrary to the order of things. The evidence on these points is reduced to the authority of these narratives themselves. In *them*, at least, the most candid mind may require strong proofs of authenticity and veracity. But, again, what is the case? They are anonymous productions; their authorship is far from certain; they were written from forty to seventy years after the events which they profess to record; the writers do not explain how they came by their information;

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\* See pages 4 and 5.



two of them appear to have copied from the first ; all the four contain notable discrepancies and contradictions ; they contain statements at variance with histories of acknowledged authority ; some of them relate wonders which even many Christians are obliged to reject as fabulous ; *and in general they present no character by which we can distinguish their TALES OF MIRACLES from the fictions which every church has found some supporters ready to vouch for on its behalf* \* \* THE MIRACULOUS BIRTH, WORKS, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST, BEING THUS SUCCESSIVELY SURRENDERED TO BE CLASSED AMONGST THE FABLES OF AN OBSCURE AGE, WHAT REMAINS OF CHRISTIANITY," &c.

And this is the "great beauty and richness both of thought and sentiment in the concluding chapter." Would it not be a work of supererogation to add another word, in order to prove the charge of plain and unequivocal Infidelity ?

Should it still be said there is yet one more expression of dissent which has not been quoted, that may shield from the charge, — it may be said in reply, that it cannot shield from what has been especially commended, as was the chapter from which were made the extracts last quoted. But as it is desirable not to give the shadow of a bearing that is not perfectly justified, the only remaining passage of dissent shall be quoted. It is as follows, (pp. 159 and 160) :

"There are several things in this book to which we cannot assent ; some things we should regard as errors. But when the whole work is examined, a very high praise must needs be granted to it, whether we agree or disagree with the writer. It is marked by candor, faithful research, good sense, *and a love of truth to a degree almost unequalled* in theological works. *Nothing is conceded* ; nothing forced. It is free from sneers and denunciations. \* \* It is cool, manly and tranquil. \* \* Love of man and reverence

for man's Maker, are conspicuous in its pages, *and we thank him heartily for the service he has done the Christian world by the timely publication of a book so serene and manly.*"

Is there any dissent in this passage that can save from the charge of heartily rejoicing in the publication of an *Infidel book*? Should the least shadow of a shelter still be sought, under the general idea that the Reviewer is but putting forward another's opinions, there is a passage of his own in which he actually ridicules the idea that in a hundred years hence any one should look for the least miraculous authority in support of Christianity.

He remarks, (p. 161), "No doubt in a hundred years the work of Mr. Hennell, that of Dr. Strauss, and many others of our day, will be turned over with a smile at the folly of an age when such books were needed; when Christians would not believe a necessary and everlasting truth unless it were accompanied and vouched for *by a contingent and empirical event, which they presumed to call a miracle!* Well they might smile; but such as live in our day can scarcely see the *ludicrous* features of the matter. It is said to be dangerous to be wise before one's time, and truly it is scarcely decorous to be merry before it."

Here the Reviewer laughs at the idea of any one's regarding Christianity as a miraculous and authoritative revelation from God to man. We call heaven and earth to record against him as INFIDEL to the religion God has given to the world by his Son Jesus Christ. Let that God mercifully judge whether the charge is sustained.

From the above painful duty, which we did not feel at liberty to decline, we more readily turn to other points in the article under consideration.

A sense of duty as strongly prompts an admission, as it did the foregoing charge of infidelity. Doubtless the writer verily thought himself the bold advocate for truth; perhaps,

even like Saul of Tarsus, that he was doing God service ; a fearful service, that the “sickly nineteenth century ” would hardly bear. Supposing then his stand-point, in his own view, to be that of an apostle of truth, trampling with giant strides upon superstitions of his age ; as one “ wise before one’s time ; ” it is not enough to reply that so thought a Gibbon, a Hume, a Paine and a Fanny Wright ; for “ it is no farther from Jerusalem to Rome, than it is from Rome to Jerusalem ; ” and such arguments may have a point attached to either end of them, at pleasure. We must join issue upon the matter of fact, so far as space and opportunity will here allow.

Instead of regarding him as an apostle of truth, treading upon superstitions of his age, we believe him to be an Infidel, *unwittingly* blaspheming against the Holy Ghost in his leading position — in his very stand-point.

The point referred to is that of *miracle*. By a miracle is understood *a manifestation of God’s power and glory* ; a manifestation of his power and glory in laws and operations of a nature so little known to us as to impress us with the presence and agency of a Being superior to aught that we have been accustomed to observe in man, or be conscious of within our own being, or to discern and feel in what we call the ordinary laws of the Universe. Would you have examples — you find them in the conception of Mary by a volition of Almighty power, revealed or declared to the mind of the Virgin Mother by a vision of an angel ; in the many that were healed by the touch and the word of Jesus and his early followers ; in the thousands that were fed from a loaf or two and a few fishes ; and in the dead that were raised, and the truths revealed, as well as in other things recorded in Sacred Scripture. Miracle, then, with the Reviewer, and with your Correspondent, stands for the same thing or things ; but the one mocks at them and the other affirms them.

Since the issue is one in which it may not perhaps be the will of God miraculously to manifest himself to the conviction of either, it may be well briefly to reason together and to endeavor to present a few thoughts, which, with the blessing of God, may induce faith in the manifestations of his power and glory as recorded in the New Testament.

Did you ever take an infant of a couple of years upon your knee, and, having fastened bits of wet paper upon the nails of the first finger of your right hand and upon the second finger of your left, and having extended those flecked fingers side by side upon your knee or upon the edge of the table before you, and having named one of them Jack and the other Gill, have you not at the words — Fly away Jack — suddenly thrown up your right hand, shutting the first finger and bringing down extended the second in its stead, all unflecked with the bit of paper, — and at the words — Fly away Gill — have you not done the same with the left hand, and at the well known words — come again Jack and come again Gill — brought back the same flecked fingers and marked the wonder of that miracle to the infant on your knee? It is to the sweet child a manifestation of power its reason cannot fathom, yet it does not doubt the fact. Nor is it any the less a reality that the little birds, or flecked fingers, disappear and reappear, because the babe cannot comprehend how it is. It is a fact which the child sees and believes, for it is really and truly so. A little more knowledge would indeed make him acquainted with all the operations, causes and effects, but still the fact would be the same. He would find all plain, and that there was neither contradiction nor absurdity in what had been done, but only fact.

Such children are we, in the hands of God. Diseases, or life and death may come and go at his word. We may witness the fact and wonder at the miracle of life departed, and life restored. Had we more knowledge we might un-



derstand all the operations, causes and effects, but we should find nothing contradictory or absurd. There would still be the facts. We may not, in the spirit's absence, and in the presence of the unanimated clay in its stead, know that God meanwhile hath that departed spirit in the hollow of his hand, the future as well as present abode of the blest, any more than the child knows that the flecked finger is curled up in the hollow of your hand, again to be extended, even as the spirit is again to tenant its clay. But because we may not know this, it does not alter the fact.

Perhaps it may be said the child is deceived. That he thinks the same finger appears every time, and that such is not the fact. Grant that the child does not fully apprehend the matter, it does not affect the *reality* of the appearance and disappearance of the flecked finger. So the witnesses of the resurrection of a widow's son, or a Lazarus, or a Jesus, may be deceived in regard to many circumstances. They may not apprehend them fully, yet such ignorance, error, or even deception if you will, wherewith they may deceive themselves, does not affect the reality of the death and the resurrection they witness — of the departure and return of the spirit. And when their knowledge shall become greater, such will know all operations, causes and effects in those miracles, and will find in them nothing unreal, nothing absurd. One may deceive himself with the idea that Joseph and his agent smuggled away the remains of Jesus through fear, and that out of that matter his resurrection from the dead was finally reported. But this deception, wherewith one is deceived, does not in the least affect the fact of the reappearance of Jesus and of his often interviews with multitudes of his followers. When we shall enter upon spiritual life, and our knowledge shall be more, we shall understand all operations, causes and effects in the matter, and shall find it neither unreal nor absurd.

Is it still said the child's miracle is a fact the adult can know and witness at any time? True. But the child cannot know about it any more than the naked fact presented to him, until he has greater knowledge; nor can he witness that fact, save when superior knowledge shall manifest it before him. Such children are we in the hands of God. We can now neither know, nor witness aught of his manifestations of power and glory, further than he may present them; and may not understand them then. But hereafter shall they be as plain to us, when we shall have grown up to spiritual life and experience, as is the miracle of his childhood to the adult; and we shall be able at any time to know and witness such facts.

Again it may be said, show me a miracle and it sufficeth? But the ground which the objector assumes renders this impossible, so far as he is concerned, and for this reason: While to him a miracle is a miracle and he cannot plainly read its causes and effects and operations, he denies it to be a miracle, let his own or others' senses declare and testify as they may. Then on the other hand, as soon as he does understand its causes and effects, it ceases to be a miracle. So that in the very stand-point he takes he effectually shuts his mind to the power of the Holy Ghost. He blasphemes against that power, by denying it, when manifested in the only form in which it can be a miracle; and when God reveals the mystery or the miracle so that it is no longer one, he blasphemes again in saying it never was one. So long as he stands at this point, miracle to him can never be.

Since testimony of witnesses and records, which he admits in regard to other things, he denies in regard to miracle, and since by his own position he closes his own mind to miracle so long as it is miracle, there is no hope of his conversion, or forgiveness, either in this world or the world to come; unless it be in making this his position

plain. There is, however, another view of the subject which may not be in vain.

As a philosopher he will not stumble at effects when there is an adequate cause. A cause adequate to miracles of the Old and New Testaments is ever present to the mind. Do we not every day witness miracles with our own senses, compared with which the healing of Judea's sick and the raising of her dead are but the small work of God? Go forth on a cloudless evening. Look around and above. We well know that those gems of light all over the firmament are worlds like the solid earth on which we stand as we gaze. We know too that science in its closet is measuring their sizes and orbits, and verifying its results by foretelling, to a second, on the dial-plate, when they will eclipse one another. Far as telescopic vision can reach, we know there are worlds on worlds in endless, infinite succession; and this too in every infinity of direction in which vision can proceed from this ball which we inhabit.

Now when we look upon this Universe of miracle, which even thought cannot compass, or fully comprehend, and read the hand-writing thereof—CREATOR AND UPHOLDER GOD—are we, can we be at a loss for power enough to reanimate six feet of clay, or strengthen a withered limb; to smooth a lake, or turn back the shadow on the dial-plate? Surely there is cause sufficient for such effects. Beholding and owning so much of God in the manifestations of his power and glory in universal nature, and adoring him therein as we do, we surely shall not say—very well, you have made the Universe nicely, but I must tell you there are some things in Judea for which you are not sufficient; and we must eke out your raising of the dead and healing the sick by trick and imagination, else there is no such thing in you!!

We certainly should pity the ignorance, that on entering the watch-maker's room, hung round with chronometers of his own handy work, should disbelieve his power to add to one a striking apparatus, to another a second-hand, or to repair and reanimate a third that had become silent; or who, if that watch-maker by applying unobserved a key to the opposite side should turn back the hands on the dial-plate, should endeavor to deny the fact and account for it in some other way, because he did not see him do it. Is not this the stand-point which has been taken in regard to manifestations of God's power and glory—in that workshop of his, the Universe?

These thoughts may perhaps show wherein it is deemed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, instead of a trampling upon superstitions.

Shelter, and some courage, seem to be gathered from the admissions of various theologians in regard to this verse and that, and this chapter and that. This is very natural and what perhaps might be expected. Still, it is doubtless understood that this is merely a popular make-weight, without, in fact, contributing aught to the truth or soundness of one's views. Numbers are no proof of the soundness of any cause. If they were so, simple Addition would soon settle the question before us so far as Christendom is concerned. Jesus was once a unit against the world; yet the unit was right, and has prevailed, and will. That there may be men of partial faith, as all are of both partial faith and partial knowledge, or that there may be those of a spirit of unbelief, is not evidence that they are right. So far as they are fellows in this matter, the preceding course of remark is as applicable to them as to the Reviewer, and as sufficient an answer in the one case as in the other. The remark, too, perhaps, may not here be amiss, that there is a difference between the rejection of a passage whose history is well known, and a fell swoop at



everything in the form of miraculous and authoritative revelation from God to man. There doubtless may be here and there a word or a sentence mistranslated, or interpolated, and it is a goodly service, so far, to correct. But wherever human ingenuity is distressing itself with effort to eke out Divine power, and kindly offering to lead the Almighty round a miracle, and help him out by a way he did not know of, but for such help, it cannot but be regarded in any, and in all cases as blasphemy, unwittingly it may be, but still blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

The treatment of the four Gospels in the Article under notice, seems to call for some remark. The Reviewer slashes away at these pillars of Christianity, in company with his Author, as though, like a second blind Sampson, he would bring the whole fabric to ruin; burying beneath it himself and all Christendom. But on a careful re-reading of those pages, may we not be pardoned for what seems to us the expression of the simple truth, in saying that we think a Harlequin with a cork sword, or a wild ass's colt, would be the juster figure, so far as real execution is concerned? And as these last may throw dust in the eyes of a great multitude, so these off-hand remarks and hints and assertions may make shipwreck of the faith of many to the ruin of their souls. Therefore should there be such remarks as space and opportunity may now permit, to windward.

The first remark of the Reviewer in connexion with his Author, concerning the Gospel by Matthew, is, (p. 148) "That it was written between 66 and 70 A. C.; for chapter xxiv. mentions things which agree very well with events up to that time but disagree with them after it." Perhaps this might serve as a specimen of all the remarks that follow concerning the four Gospels. So far as its prophecies are fulfilled, it is said they must have been written

after the events, and a date is assigned them accordingly ; and then is added the mere assertion that there are events referring to a later period with which it does not agree. No events are mentioned as instances of disagreement. Now in this specimen sentence we have a slur at prophecy, and an assertion of its falsity, without the least evidence to sustain it, inasmuch as we know of nothing in " ch. xxiv." that events have not verified. The question is begged to begin with, and then the matter left with an assertion unsustained by the least evidence. How can that be answered that is not produced? There is no other answer but a simple statement showing that there is nothing to answer. Yet is there a large shadow meant to be cast over the divine and truthful character of that Gospel, in this brief sentence, with nothing real in it but its hue of deep unbelief.

Again, a blow is aimed at Matthew's credibility because he has quoted and applied to Jesus, as expressive of circumstances in his condition, passages from the prophets of his nation which originally had no reference in the Reviewer's opinion, or his Author's, to Jesus. It is said — " If he would force the prophecies to *accommodate* his own views he might also tamper with facts." Suppose that passages were applied to Jesus, as justly expressive, which in their original utterance had no reference to him ; would that discredit the truth of him that did it? Were one to apply, as very apt to Harrison, a remark that had been originally uttered of Washington, and add, the prophet's word was fulfilled in Harrison ; might that one be justly declared a knave that would " tamper with facts ? " Surely not.

The page from which the last remarks were quoted, seems to abound in others equally groundless and unjust. It is said — " The birth of Jesus, if found by itself, would be considered as a wild Eastern tale ; his adventures with

the devil would be mentioned by few persons in modern times except as a poetical vision." The birth of Jesus may seem a "wild Eastern tale" to one whose point of view denies to his God the power to create or to reanimate his children, while it gives to the jeweller power to make a new watch, and in a different way if he chooses, or to repair a broken main-spring. But to one whose God is considered at least equal to a good jeweller or mechanic, and as having also the attribute by which he may speak and it is done, there is no necessary fiction in the volition that gave to a Jesus embryo being, or in the vision of an Angel that communicated that fact to the mind of Mary. In regard to "his adventures with the devil," as they are termed, is it not unjust to hold that up as a narrative of outward occurrences, rather than as language in accordance with notions of the time by which to represent the moral conflict and victory of the soul, that was most brightly to reflect God's moral image to the world? Is not the language as plainly figurative as that which speaks of the sun turned into darkness, the moon into blood, and the stars falling from heaven — signifying destruction and desolation to a city — as complete as it would be under such events were they to occur? These points are spoken to, because, though they have no weight in themselves, they may yet appear to little ones in Christ Jesus, and to the unlearned and unreflecting, as stumbling-blocks and rocks of offence.

In the next sentence it is said — "In the account of the crucifixion, the author of this Gospel mentions an earthquake, a rending of the rocks, the opening of the graves, and the resurrection of many bodies of the saints, — events nowhere else alluded to in the New Testament." Now the last remark can only be true of the graves of the saints. Matthew, Mark and Luke alike make mention of the darkened sun, and the veil of the temple rent; incidents sufficient to open the graves and expose the bones of buried

dead. Is there, then, the least soundness in this attempt to assassinate the Christian's faith in the Gospel by Matthew?

There are yet one or two more remarks from the same page, whose seeming is such as to justify a word or two. It is said — "He mentions six supernatural dreams ; \* sometimes he relates events in a natural manner ; but sometimes adds what could not be known. Thus he gives the prayers and tells the movements of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the only persons present were asleep." The Reviewer seems troubled that he whose inspiration gave understanding to man, should make an impression, or convey a lesson to that understanding, through visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on man ; and he counts up the recorded instances, of whatever description, and calls them dreams. There is no argument in this, and it is difficult to know why it is done, unless it be for the opportunity of so using the word dreams, as to suggest to the mind the idea that this Gospel was but a dream book, among its other imputed defects. The references in the note show that each of the six cases named, are in the first and second chapters, except the dream of the wife of Pilate ; and I see not any worse philosophy in the idea that God should impress the mind by a vision of the night, than that he should do the same, by vision of the outward eye, at midday, or evening. If it were true that Matthew was wont to relate "what could not be known," it would surely discredit him. But is not the Reviewer in quite as much danger from this charge, when he asserts that what is said of the movements and the prayers of Jesus in the Garden, is an instance of it? Does he not state what cannot be known by him? It is evident indeed from the narrative,

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\* The note is as follows, "Matt. i. 20 ; ii. 12, 13, 19, 22 ; xxvii. 19." It is hoped the reader will look up the references.



that as our Lord returned to Peter, James and John, he found some of them, and perhaps all of them, asleep ; but if even the three were asleep at his return, they might have been wakeful long enough to have witnessed his kneeling and to have heard at least the brief petition they report, or that that was the purport of his worship. Neither is it impossible that when he returned, exhorting them to watch and pray, that he might mention the burden of his own thrice uttered prayer ere he received the support and trust he sought. Surely the candid mind, and the unbiassed, will not be troubled that his most intimate friends should know, in a night of such most painful and perilous interest, what was the burden of his sorrows and his prayers, though the wearied flesh might not be wakeful every moment of that all eventful night. Yet these are the grounds on which, at length, the Reviewer puts forth his Author, in his own words, as coming to this sweeping conclusion — “ Upon the whole, then, the most that we can conclude seems to be that this Gospel was the work of some one who became a member of the Jewish church before the war, and who collected the relics of the acts and sayings of Jesus reported by Matthew the Apostle, introducing some traditions which he found elsewhere, and filling up copiously from his own invention.” After the remarks already made, few, we trust, will find even the shadow of a foundation for the above conclusion. Is it not possible that “ in a hundred years ” hence people may be as apt to smile at such a conclusion, from such premises, as that they will smile that any one should ever have been so foolish as to respect the Gospel of Matthew ?

Mark is next assailed, but it seems to be with blank cartridges. There is but one positive charge, to wit, that he “ mixes these relics of reality with some spurious matter.” As no mention is made of what is reality, or what spurious,

there is certainly no execution unless it consists in the bare mention of the work of this follower of Jesus in the same sentence with "spurious matter." There is assertion ; but no evidence or mention of evidence, or fact, is referred to, as spurious matter. The other charges are all negative, — charges of omissions. Grant that he has omitted all that is stated, and what follows more than this, — that God did not raise up and inspire a second Evangelist to do just what he had done by a first. It is not pretended that the second contradicts the first, but only that it is not the first. If the second had contained precisely what the first does and no more and no less, then the objection would have been at once — it is nothing but the same thing over again ; nothing but a copy — and who could have maintained to the contrary ? Matthew is condemned for certain things inserted, and on the next page Mark is condemned for not inserting them. At least the circumstance is held up with a view to discredit them both, and in the Reviewer is fulfilled the Scripture — We piped unto you, and you have not danced ; we have mourned unto you, and you have not lamented.

Luke is dealt with quite cavalierly, and in a single, off-hand paragraph. . It contains but two charges, and those mere assumptive assertions, without the least shadow of evidence. It is said — "He has many stories and parables of his own which he selected from popular tradition or previous writers." When did Luke tell where he got them ; or that tradition, or plagiarism were his only sources of information ? What is the amount of such an assertion when unsustained by the least reference even, to evidence. Does it amount to any thing more than would the following reply to the entire Article under notice — to wit — It is a selection from popular infidel tradition and previous infidel writers. Yet such is the reply on which the Reviewer

seems to expect the annihilation of the Christian faith of eighteen centuries. Again, it is said of Luke — “The fictions he adopts:” — alluding to the ministrations of angels and the *reappearance of Jesus after death!* It may be well to quote the whole sentence — to wit — “The fictions he adopts — the visits of Gabriel to Zacharias and Mary, the scenes at the temple, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, *and of Jesus to the two disciples at Em-mans* — indicate a more *refined imagination* than the *tales* of Joseph and the angel, Herod and the Magi.” So then it appears that the existence of Spirits or Angels, or at least their ministrations, are but a fiction, and the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, *ditto!* These are things which “this sickly nineteenth century” would hardly have discovered without the Reviewer’s dictum; and perhaps even as it is, will not believe, until somewhat beyond mere assertion is offered in proof. It is difficult to account for such assertions without even an attempt at proof, unless it be the result of a spirit of confirmed unbelief, honestly wishing to force itself upon the public by mere assumption and boldness of declaration, in the hope to beget its like as widely as possible. All that seems to be necessary in reply is, to call attention to the fact that it is mere assertion, and that assertion, without evidence, proves nothing one way or the other.

The remarks that follow, on “the three Gospels,” are of the same objectionable character. Sweepingly infidel, without any attempt at proof or reference to evidence. After the above remarks, a specimen, perhaps, may be sufficient: — “It appears that they were written a considerable time after the events they relate; it is probable, though not certain, that the writers learned some parts from apostles or eye-witnesses, but it is uncertain which the parts are, and it is probable they are largely mingled with second-hand narratives, hearsay, and tradition.” — But it is tedious to

multiply instances of unsubstantiated declarations. They do but show the opinion of him who makes them, while they weigh not with the reflecting mind, any farther than they are verified by proofs, or confirmed by reasoning that cannot be answered.

John shares with the other three in the kind of notice so liberally dispensed. "The fourth Gospel, he thinks, was written about 97 A. C. This is of a very different character. Christ's discourses are long controversial orations without parables; the kingdom of Heaven is nearly lost sight of; the fall of Jerusalem never alluded to. Several new subjects are introduced; the incarnation of the Logos in Christ; his coming down from Heaven; and the promise of the Comforter or Holy Spirit." The difference between this and the other Gospels is made the first point. Had there been no difference between the four, would not that circumstance have been urged as indicative of fraud, collusion, conspiracy to impose? Rejecting miracle, as we have already seen, would not the Reviewer have regarded such a circumstance as conclusive of trick? But now that they are different, *that* circumstance must be the rock of offence. Had they been all alike, of what use would they have been to the world compared with what they now are? There is indeed no distinct statement that the differences between the different Gospels are proof of their worthlessness; yet on looking at the remarks upon each Gospel, in succession, one can hardly fail of the conclusion, that it was designed in this way to make them have at least the appearance of wholly discrediting and destroying one another. But no judicious mind claims an inspiration that should utterly alter the nature or tastes of its subjects. They still might retain their individual natures and their peculiar attachments to certain portions or features of Christianity, and dwell chiefly on these, while at God's



behest, each should be only true in that which he wrote, and each should thereby be help and confirmation to the other, as they have ever been, are now, and will continue to be. Were they chargeable with often and palpable inconsistencies, the case would be far different. But while such is the insinuation, and in a following paragraph from the foreign Author, the direct statement, no instance in proof is cited. On the other hand the increase of testimony arising from their characters as separate and independent witnesses, has passed into a proverb that can never be disproved. The idea that "the kingdom of Heaven is nearly lost sight of" in this Gospel, will, we think, be somewhat new to those who have learned from it to dwell in God and to have God dwelling in them, as from no other source. If this Gospel does not unseal fountains of living waters within the soul; if it does not dispense the bread of life; unite the disciple to God's image as the branch is united to the vine; if it does not lead the believer to become one with God, and while on earth to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, and to be able to say with him, though sons of men and on earth, that they are in heaven, we have read it more amiss than we had supposed. Yet is it said, the kingdom of Heaven is nearly lost sight of, notwithstanding its house of the Father in which are many mansions.

Is there any better foundation for the statement of new subjects introduced in this Gospel? Mention is made of the incarnation of the Logos. Do not the other Gospels teach that the wisdom and power, in short, the image of God, was made flesh, or in other words, manifested to the world in the person of Jesus. That his power, wisdom, judgment, works, doctrine, mission—all were of God. That he was but the representative of the Father after the manner that all Christians should be. And is not this the incarnation of the Logos, or the manifestation of the

Father through the flesh, or in the persons of his children?

The promise of the Holy Spirit is also mentioned as a new subject in this Gospel. It would verily seem to us, either that the Reviewer must have written hastily, or that he must have read more *about* his Bible, and from unfriendly hands, than he had read of that book itself. Enough, perhaps, to refer to Luke xi. 13. — How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. An error so obvious needs not further remark.

Additional remarks and charges are put forth in the words of the foreign Author, but without quotation, reference, or evidence, in the way of proof. Of course no further reply is necessary — indeed none can be made unless it be to meet assertion with rebuke, or call for proof. There is room, however, for remark upon this prominent feature of the Article — an endeavor to destroy all confidence in the four Gospels. We speak of it as it appears to us. We have already admitted that the Reviewer probably regards it as pouring much light upon the superstitions of his age. He doubtless will pity a feeble Brother of “this sickly nineteenth,” that he should take the trouble to blot so much paper in such a cause; but the light of time and of eternity will yet show the matter differently. Should the Reviewer come to know the just and true and salutary restraints which his off-hand infidel expressions have removed; should he come to know how many lives may thereby be separated from all that we adore and venerate in God, and all that may help to conform us to his image and likeness, as revealed in Jesus; should he come to know how many may be thereby separated from the fountain of all inspiration, and of all support, and yield themselves to passion, earth and sense, to the ruin of the whole physical, moral,

intellectual and spiritual being, he will then think differently about pouring light upon superstitions of the age. And in eternity, the consciousness of such death to all worthy life, and to souls, will be among the most painful retributions of all those, wherein one's works shall follow him.

The Writer of this re-review is no stranger to this anti-miracle Christianity, and a God, kept close to the traces, in which his children may be pleased in their hypothetical omnipotent rationality to have harnessed him, and driven him as they thought best. He once thought to have a Christianity without a miracle, and a God who must obey such laws only as his poor intellect might tell him had a "right to be." But God has graciously given him to know of his wonderful works, as many and as great as are on record in those Gospels the Reviewer would discredit, and to find the truest reason, in the works of his hand and the revelations of his truth, as he hath given, and still giveth them, to such as are able to receive and bear them.

Remark is next made upon the resurrection of Lazarus, —and the chief trouble seems to be that no mention was made of the miracle, until the book that contains the mention of it, was written. We can see no force in this objection, or in the idea that one Evangelist should record a circumstance, and that a remarkable one, in the life of Jesus, and the others not. If either one had recorded all that was desirable, we might just as well complain that God was tautological in permitting four to be given to the world, as to complain now, that one mentions events that others do not. The objection to the miracle itself, was perhaps sufficiently considered when discussing the direct matter of miracle. It here remains only to speak of Hennell's choice in miracles. He objects to the removal of natural penalties, (pp. 153, 154,) and says that if Jesus instead, had discovered and declared causes of those

penalties, the miracle would have been greater—verily, Saul among the Prophets! It was a remark, we think, of the now sainted Channing—‘inconsistency is the great mark of error.’ Here, upon the Author’s own confession, a greater miracle has come out in process of time, than any of those at which he stumbles.

The remarks on Prophecy, in the language of the Author quoted, shall be passed with but a brief notice. Those to which we would refer are these—“As to the New Testament fulfilling the prophecies of the Old—in the two most conspicuous features of Jewish prophecy, there could not be a more decided failure. A triumphant successor of David was promised, and a carpenter’s son was crucified. Zion was to be exalted, and Zion was demolished. Nor were the Christian prophecies more fortunate. The Son of Man was to appear again before that generation passed away, and he has not yet appeared.” (p. 154.) Though there is room for doubt whether this passage was written in jesting irony or as a grave matter, still it seems to call for some notice. Each prophecy quoted, or alluded to, is misapprehended or perverted, and then pronounced a failure. It is said—“A triumphant successor of David was promised, and a carpenter’s son was crucified.” True—except the phrase—carpenter’s son; but why not tell the whole truth?—of his resurrection and ascension; of his kingdom, now embracing Christendom, and spreading to all the corners of the earth. A kingdom, in comparison with which the earthly rule of a David and a Solomon is but as the dust that cleaveth to the balance. Simply because of the Author’s Infidelity, denying the resurrection, doth it come to his mind that the fulfilment of this prophecy ended with the crucifixion of a carpenter’s son. We gladly call upon the world, with open eyes and in broad day, to say whether the present reign of Christ is not triumphantly beyond any dominion ever holden by David. In the sure



mercies of David, wide Christendom is blest, to say nought of the myriad hosts of Messiah's kingdom who compass his presence in glory.

The same is true of — “Zion was to be exalted, and Zion was demolished.” The Author would have it understood that by *Zion* was meant Judea, or Jerusalem, and then in the destruction of that city would he find the demolition of *Zion*. But who of Christendom, even what babe in Christ does not know the greater glory of the Christian Zion over the Jewish, and of the New Jerusalem over the Old.

A like remark applies also to the point that — “The Son of Man was to appear again before that generation passed away, and he has not yet appeared.” Jesus himself foretold the character of that coming, and expressly warned against the idea of a literal return, as cherished by the Author. He likened his coming to the spreading light from East to West, saying, so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be in his day. And so it hath been. Even before that generation passed away Judaism was not, and the light of Christianity — the coming of the Son of Man — had taken its place. And yet the grave remark — he has not yet appeared. How near extremes sometimes approach each other. We scarcely expected to find a *Millerite* in Hennell or “P.”

Were we disposed to be humorous, we would place in juxtaposition with the above, the difficulty expressed, (page 162,) to wit: — “In what language should God have spoken to men from heaven — in Hebrew, Greek?” &c. As this is a favorite difficulty and twice brought up, it may perhaps be pardonable in the eyes of an enlightened public, to suggest that a revelation would only be such, when made in the language of him to whom it is given, or through whom it is given.

It ought, perhaps, to be stated that the difficulty about the mother-tongue of Revelation is from remarks near the

close of the Article, upon Hennell's "Christian Theism," instead of his "Origin of Christianity."

We will ask room for but one extract more. Speaking of the Bible, the Author, who, in this work — "Christian Theism" — is unqualifiedly commended, exclaims, (p. 164) — "This, the book to which stupendous Nature itself was only the preface! — which the Creator of sun and skies has thought it worth while to attest by special messages and inspirations! Neither its genealogies, histories, nor poems satisfy my want. The spirit of adoration seems to be, by long perusal of this volume, excluded from the great temple of the Universe and compressed into the holy ark of Israel, or into an upper chamber at Jerusalem. Can this book really be the highest field of human study and thought? There must be some mistake."

A mistake indeed there is! Well may we speak of it, and may God help us so to do, that his children may be blessed and his name glorified in his Word, even as in his other works. It is said, through the Author, whom in the work from which the above is quoted, the Reviewer entirely and unqualifiedly commends — That this Word of Revelation does not satisfy his want. There must be some mistake. And who is it that says this? One who has, with infidel hand, torn from Christianity every seal of divinity, every reflection of divine attributes, made it a tissue of "tales," "fictions" and "traditions," and then forsooth, it does not satisfy. Strange indeed! It ought not then to satisfy. A mistake truly, that would look for satisfaction in such a Christianity. Murderers are not supposed to be pleased with ghosts. Few would be at all thankful for all that the Reviewer or the Author leave of revelation; for their very stand-point is open hostility with the possibility of an authoritative and miraculous revelation. Could they but feel that Jesus was indeed a Christ

of God — *the* Christ of God — and that each recorded manifestation of power and glory was but a legitimate fruit of that anointing, not only in him, but in any who through him become children and heirs of God, their feelings towards it would be as different from what they now are, as light from darkness. Could they, in their own experience, feel and know this religion to be not only in Jesus but in all, just in proportion as they truly live it, a power to heal the diseases, take away the sins, regenerate the souls and sanctify the spirits of men — could they in their experience come to know it as able to clothe them with each reflected attribute they own and adore in God, just so far as they truly live it — could they experience it as God manifest in the flesh, even as in that of Jesus, in all the gifts of the Holy Ghost — then, and not till then, can they be expected fully or justly to appreciate it, or to find it meeting the wants of man as a child and heir of God. Man is the offspring, the germ of Deity. Christ is the living specimen of that offspring, that germ, unfolded in the Father's image and likeness so far as it was unfolded, as the world's pattern in every respect, while he was on this side the grave, and in his departure to the spiritual world, and his condition there. We except not one power, or gift of Jesus, from being the legitimate fruit of that Word, which to the Reviewer and his Author, is a mistake, and cannot satisfy.

We question not the feeling of greater supposed freedom and higher truth than humble Christians are thought to have; for the time has been, that such feelings were not strangers to him who would now contend for *Miracle, Revelation from God, and Anointing of the Holy Ghost and of Power*, even to the cross. Anointing for *all*, even according to the faith and obedience in which they seek it.

One word in regard to the result of such publications as the Article under consideration. God may be pleased to

make them the means of calling out anew the merits of a Saviour's mission and of Revelation, so that they shall result in the end in new triumphs of his truth, and new developments of the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. It will be even so in the end. The day, we humbly hope and trust in God through Christian faith, is not distant, when the Christianity of Christ shall be manifest in all Christians. Still we doubt not that the Article which was supposed would prove a manly shoulder at the chariot-wheels of truth, will separate many a soul from ever being the image of all that we love in Jesus, or adore in God. All that earth could offer, and all that the Reviewer would leave of Revelation, whether for time or Eternity, would leave one shuddering at the thought, that hereafter the freed spirit must be conscious, as of its own work, of the condition of the souls which such an Article may be instrumental in separating from the fountain of all inspiration, power and blessing, revealed from God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Without one unkind feeling, — nay even in a love that would freely and kindly court the social interview, and friendly converse on these very themes, have these remarks been made. Language indeed that may sound harshly has been used, but it was felt to be at the stern bidding of truth, and not of passion or ill will. That we may yet come to see and to EXPERIENCE in Christianity, GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH, is the fervent prayer of a Friend and Brother.

T.

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 ERRATA.

Page 6, eighth line from top, for "the crucified" read "The Crucified"  
 — twenty-first line, for "commended" read "commends."



THE  
TRUE POSITION  
OF  
REV. THEODORE PARKER,  
BEING  
A REVIEW  
OF  
REV. R. C. WATERSTON'S LETTER,  
IN THE FOURTH QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE BENEVOLENT  
FRATERNITY OF CHURCHES.

"Audi alteram partem."

BOSTON:  
ANDREWS, PRENTISS & STUDLEY,  
No. 11 Devonshire Street.

1845.



“**ABON BEN ADHEM** (may his tribe increase,)   
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,   
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,   
Making it rich and like a lilly in bloom,   
An angel writing in a book of gold.   
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold;   
And to the presence in the room he said,   
‘What writest thou?’ — The angel raised his head,   
And, with a look made all of sweet accord,   
Answered — ‘The names of those who love the Lord.’   
‘And is mine one?’ said Adhem. — ‘Nay, not so,’   
Replied the angel. Adhem spoke more low,   
But cheerly still, and said, ‘I pray thee, then,   
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.’   
The angel wrote and vanished; — the next night   
He came again, with a great wakening light,   
And showed the names the love of God had blest,   
And lo! — Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.”





# REVIEW, & C.

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SHAKSPERE'S HAMLET.

*Present, the Ghost, Horatio, and Marcellus.*

HOR. Stop it, Marcellus.

MAR. Shall I strike at it with my partizan?

HOR. Do, if it will not stand. — 'T is here!

MAR. 'T is gone!

We do it wrong, being so majestic,

To offer it the show of violence;

For it is, as the air, invulnerable,

And our vain blows malicious mockery.

For several months past our religious community, or at least the Unitarian portion of it, has been in strong commotion, consequent on the exchange of pulpits between Rev. Mr. Sargent, late one of the Ministers-at-large, in this city, and Rev. Theodore Parker, of West Roxbury; and subsequently a similar expression of fellowship on the part of Rev. Mr. Clarke, of this city, towards Mr. Parker, has increased the agitation.

With regard to Mr. Sargent, situated as he was, and holding his office, as he did, under the auspices and by the control of an association called "The Fraternity of Churches," we do not see how he could have done otherwise than as he did — resign his office, unless he were willing — as he was not — to bind himself in future by excluding Mr. Parker from his pulpit, in compliance with the expressed wish of that Fraternity. Whether he acted, as "*the world*" would say, wisely, in regard to the original matter of exchange, or with due regard to that *sectarian* policy which it seems Unitarians, as well as others, are now obliged to practice; whether, in short, he "erred in judgment" by overlooking or setting aside

the mere question of *denominational expediency* in this case, as commonly understood, is a question on which there are differences of opinion, and one which we are not now concerned to answer; though it may well be a query whether Unitarians are, after all, consistent in the course they are now pursuing towards Mr. Parker, and how they will reconcile any exclusion of him with that principle and theory of the "largest toleration," with which, as a Denomination, they "began life." Suffice it to say "the Executive Committee of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches," who may be considered as representing in this case (for argument sake) the soul of the Unitarian churches in Boston, (or at least they would seem to think so,) took the alarm at once in consequence of Mr. Sargent's exchange—held a meeting immediately, deliberated on the matter, framed a remonstrance which they sent to each of the Ministers-at-large, and expressed the most determined purpose and desire to exclude Mr. Parker henceforth from their chapels. Mr. Sargent replies, that, though in many points he may not give assent to Mr. Parker's peculiar views, he cannot reconcile with liberal principles any act of exclusion or proscription in regard to him; and therefore retires from the pulpit which is laid under such restriction. Mr. Waterston, it seems, takes a different view; assenting to the requisitions of the Fraternity, coming under their restraint, and making his dissent from Mr. Parker's views the plea for not exchanging.

An editorial article in the *Christian Register* of January 18th, expresses surprise that two such different letters should have emanated from two ministers holding the same office. Perhaps this difference may not seem so surprising if we consider the different circumstances and positions in which the two ministers have been placed. Mr. Sargent has had the labor and responsibility of building up a congregation under such circumstances of constraint and separation from others as might well have favored his *extreme* independence. Mr. Waterston, on the other hand, having entered on a parish ready formed by the ministry of others who had preceded him, had little else to do than to exercise conservative influences. He was educated in awe of these influences; immersed in them, wedded to them; and, as he meets them every day in the street, and by social intercourse, is forewarned by the ominous and

admonitory shake of their fingers. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that Mr. Waterston should have written just such a letter as he has; though, in our opinion, it does somewhat less than justice to the absolute faith and real position of Mr. Parker. It contains a bundle of heretical theorems, gathered, doubtless, with some pains, and taken out of their connection from the published writings of Mr. Parker; thereby mangling, in some cases, the real thought, and conjuring up, as by a purpose prepense, the mere spectres of his idea in place of the reality. It must have cost the writer some hours of expurgatory labor to have culled these few weeds from a garden where he knows there is so much more that is rich and faithful and redolent of spirituality; and we marvel that he could so trample the wheat and flowers under foot while in search of the chaff and tares. In so doing he has scarcely obeyed the Saviour's rule, to "let both grow together until the harvest." We can account for his patience under this labor for "elegant extracts," only by the *impatience* which a mind so honest as his must naturally feel under the constraint which is now put upon him by the "Benevolent Fraternity of Churches," and his consequent willingness to make out a case against the excommunicated individual who has innocently forged his fetters. But let that pass. For our own part we were not much alarmed by the bristling array of guns which the author of this epistle has gathered and stacked up out of the armory of Mr. Parker's thoughts, for we know that "the sword of the spirit" is, still, somewhere there, to be drawn forth in good time, as occasion calls, to the honor and for the defence of him who wears and wields it in all purity of heart. In the progress of opportunity, as charity and discrimination are true to their mission, we shall doubtless behold this sword gleaming and waving aloft, when the weaker weapons that have crossed or struck it in their spite are all broken into rusty fragments. And now let us say we deprecate and denounce this practice of raking together all the exceptionable phrases and bolder expressions of a writer, and then parading them as a fair specimen of his actual or aggregate faith and opinions. The writer of that letter knows that a similar research, or scissor-like criticism, into Mr. Parker's volume, with another purpose, would develop quite as much on the other side, which would be called, in common parlance, "quite

*evangelical*;" and that scarcely any work of any compass would bear the test of such a garbling analysis for a single moment. It is disingenuous and unfair, and no more a specimen of Mr. Parker's theological dimensions than it would be to judge of a man's bodily stature or physiognomy by some absconded locks of his hair, the paring of his nails, or the number of humors we might count upon his face. Such a letter reminds one of the man who carried about a brick as a specimen of the house he had built. It was a very good brick, but a poor enough edifice; and he who would be shallow enough to judge the whole mansion by that bit of baked clay would deserve no better shelter for his credulity. Let those believe who will, that Mr. Parker sweeps the board of all that we call saving faith; for our own part we doubt the fact, and we deny it, notwithstanding this awful array of spectral sayings quoted in the letter. We have intimated that a more candid and charitable examination of Mr. Parker's writings would evolve quite as much, on the other side, which may be deemed, (to use a common phrase) "evangelical" or orthodox. "It is a poor rule," they say, "which will not work both ways;" and we shall therefore take such analysis, or rather extracts, from these writings, as may offset the extracts of Mr. Waterston's letter. It would be difficult, indeed, to find in any theological works more glowing and beautiful representations of the Saviour's character, more profound reverence for all that is holy and good, or more faithful expositions of Christianity as the absolute truth of God, than are contained in the miscellaneous writings of Mr. Parker, and his voluminous "Discourse on Religion." For example, speaking of Christ, he calls him "the chiefest incarnation of God"; "the organ through which the Infinite spoke"; "the King of truth"; "the proudest achievement of the human race"; "the greatest soul of all the sons of men"; "that divine man whose name is ploughed into the world"; "the profoundest religious genius God has raised up"; "that loftiest spirit that has bestrode the ages, standing still before us as the highest ideal ever realized on the earth." "In an age of corruption, (he continues) as all ages are, Jesus stood and looked up to God. There was nothing between him and the Father of all; no old word, be it of Moses or Esaias, of a living Rabbi or a Sanhedrim of Rabbis; no sin or perverseness of the finite will. As the



result of this virgin purity of soul and perfect obedience, the light of God shone down into the very deeps of his soul, bringing all of the Godhead which flesh can receive. He felt that God's word was in him; that he was one with God. He told what he saw, — the Truth; he lived what he felt, — a life of Love."

Again, in another place, he says — "To our apprehension Jesus was much greater than the evangelists represent him." \* \* \*

"How vast has his influence been. How his spirit wrought in the hearts of his disciples — rude, selfish, bigoted, as at first they were. How it has wrought in the world. His words judge the nations. The wisest son of man has not measured their height. They speak to what is deepest in profound men; what is holiest in good men; what is divinest in religious men. They kindle anew the flame of devotion in hearts long cold. They are spirit and life. His truth was not derived from Moses and Solomon; but the light of God shone through him, not colored, not bent aside. His life is the perpetual rebuke of all time since. It condemns ancient civilization. It condemns modern civilization. Wise men we have since had, and good men; but this Galilean youth strode before the world whole thousands of years — so much of Divinity was in him. His words solve the questions of this present age. In him the Godlike and the Human met and embraced and a divine life was born. Measure him by the world's greatest sons, how poor they are! Try him by the best of men, how little and low they appear! Exalt him as much as we may, we shall yet, perhaps, come short of the mark. In him, as in a mirror, we may see the image of God, and go on from glory to glory, till we are changed into the same image, led by the spirit which enlightens the humble. Viewed in this way how beautiful is the life of Jesus. Heaven has come down to earth, or rather, earth has become heaven."

Once more, speaking of the fulness of our Saviour's sympathy, this modern heretic exclaims — "That mightiest heart that ever beat, stirred by the spirit of God, how it wrought in his bosom! What words of rebuke, of comfort, counsel, admonition, promise, hope, did he pour out; words that stir the soul as summer dews call up the faint and sickly grass!" "What deep divinity of soul in his prayers, his action, sympathy, resignation!" "Rarely, almost never, do we see the vast divinity within that soul, which,

new though it was in the flesh, at one step goes before the world whole thousands of years, judges the race, decides for us questions we dare not agitate as yet, and breathes the very breath of heavenly love. The Christian world, aghast at such awful beauty in the flesh, transfixed with wonder as such a spirit rises in his heavenly flight, veils its face, and says — ‘It is a God. Such thoughts are not for men. Such life betrays the God.’ And is it not the Divine which the flesh enshrouds? To speak in figures, the brightness of his glory; the express image of his person; the clear resemblance of the all beautiful; the likeness of God in which man is made?” “Here, indeed, was the greatest soul of all the sons of men; one before whom the majestic mind of Grecian sages and of Hebrew seers must veil its face. His perfect obedience made him free. So complete was it that but a single will dwelt in him and God; and he could say, ‘I and the Father are one.’ For this reason his teaching was absolute. God’s word was in him.” \* \* \* “What man, what sect, what church has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life? Let the world answer in its cry of anguish!”

Does all this sound like infidelity, in Mr. Parker, or a disposition to depreciate Jesus Christ? Then hear some more. Speaking of the influence of the Saviour’s teachings, he beautifully says, “His word swayed the multitude as pendant vines swing in the summer wind; as the spirit of God moved on the waters of chaos, and said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light.’ No doubt many a rude fisherman of Gennesareth heard his words with a heart bounding and scarce able to keep in his bosom — went home a new man, with a legion of angels in his breast, and from that day lived a life divine and beautiful.” \* \* \* “So God spake in Jesus, as he taught the perfect Religion, — anticipated, developed, but never yet transcended.”

Such are the views of Mr. Parker in regard to Jesus and the truth he proclaimed. He calls the words of Jesus “the music of heaven;” the Bible “a whole library of the deepest and most earnest thoughts and feelings and piety and love ever recorded in human speech.” “With all the obstacles men have thrown in its path,” he eloquently remarks, “how much has the Bible done for mankind? No abuse has deprived us of all its blessings. You

trace its path across the world from the day of Pentecost to this day. As a river springs up in the heart of a sandy continent, having its father in the skies and its birth-place in distant, unknown mountains; as the stream rolls on, enlarging itself, making in that arid waste a belt of verdure, wherever it turns its way; creating palm groves and fertile plains, where the smoke of the cottager curls up at eventide, and marble cities send the gleam of their splendor far into the sky; such has been the course of the Bible on the earth. It has made a deeper mark on the world than the rich and beautiful literature of all the heathen." "There is not a boy nor a girl, all Christendom through, but their lot is made better by that great book," &c. &c.

Such are some of the sentiments of one who is accused of denying the Scriptures and wishing to overturn Christianity.

Let us hear, then, what further he *says* of Christianity as a system. In his "Discourse on Religion" he speaks of Christ as teaching "a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God." And again he says — "In Christianity we have a religion wide as the East and the West; deep and high as the nadir and zenith; certain as truth, and everlasting as God." Can such a man be truly said to have a contempt for Christianity? If so, then, he is criminating himself, where he says, in another place, "No friend of religion and of man can be hostile to the Christianity of Christ." Who, then, can believe that such a writer and teacher can be, in any true or allowable sense, an enemy to the cross or religion of Jesus? Oh no: as we ourselves must answer to the great "Searcher of hearts," let us judge him with all charity, out of his own mouth and by the prevalent and oft-repeated sentiments of his own books; and there, again, we find it written — "The Christianity of Christ is the highest and most perfect ideal ever presented to the longing eyes of man." \* \* \* \* "It is high and noble now as ever. The religion of Reason, of the Soul, the Word of God, is still strong and flame-like as when first it dwelt in Jesus, the chiefest incarnation of God. Age has not dimmed the lustre of this light that lighteneth all, though they cover their eyes in obstinate perversity and turn away their faces from this great light." "Is it not worth a man's wish," he asks, "worth his prayers, worth his work, to seek the living Christianity, the Chris-

tianity of Christ? Not having this we seem but bubbles, bubbles on an ocean, shoreless and without bottom; bubbles that sparkle a moment in the sun of life, then burst to be no more. But with it we are men, immortal souls, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." \* \* \* \* "Silence the voice of Christianity and the world is well-nigh dumb; for gone is that sweet music which kept in awe the rulers and the people, which cheers the poor widow in her lonely toil, and comes like light through the windows of morning, to men who sit stooping and feeble, with failing eyes and a hungering heart. It is gone, all gone! — only the cold, bleak world left before them." "Through centuries of wasting these words have flown on, like a dove in the storm, and now wait to descend on hearts pure and earnest, — as the Father's spirit, we are told, came down on his lowly Son."

"Looking at the word of Jesus, then — at real Christianity, the pure religion he taught, nothing appears more fixed and certain. Its influence widens as light extends; it deepens as the nations grow more wise." "Let men improve never so far in civilization, or soar never so high on the wings of Religion and Love, they can never outgo the flight of Truth and Christianity. It will always be above them. It is as if we were to fly towards a star, which becomes larger and more bright the nearer we approach, till we enter and are absorbed in its glory. If we look carelessly on the ages that have gone by, or only on the surfaces of things as they come up before us, there is reason to fear; for we confound the truth of God with the word of man. So, at a distance, the cloud and the mountain seem the same. When the drift changes with the passing wind, an unpractised eye might fancy the mountain itself was gone. But the mountain stands to catch the clouds, to win the blessing they bear, and send it down to moisten the fainting violet, to form streams which gladden valley and meadow, and sweep on at last to the sea in deep channels, laden with fleets. Thus the forms of the Church, the creeds of the sects, the conflicting opinions of teachers, float around the sides of the Christian mount, and swell and toss, and rise and fall, and dart their lightning, and roll their thunder, but they neither make nor mar the mount itself. Its lofty summit far transcends the tumult; knows nothing of the storm which roars below, but burns with rosy light at evening and



at morn ; gleams in the splendors of the mid-day sun ; sees his light when the long shadows creep over plain and moorland ; and all night long has its head in the heavens, and is visited by troops of stars which never set, nor veil their face to aught so pure and high."

If this is infidelity commend us to more of it ; and if these are the views of one who would depreciate Christianity, pray tell us where are the faithful, whose doctrines would any more exalt it ? " But," say the conservative opponents of the writer thus quoted, " we admit that he exalts the claim of Christianity as an absolute system of truth, and gives most glowing and beautiful pictures of the character of Christ, but he derogates from his *authority*. He denies the miracles, and calls them nothing but fables ; disparages the correctness of the Gospel records, and sneers at sacred things and institutions. He degrades the doctrine of inspiration, and has little or no faith in the supernatural." (Perhaps it is well that these same accusations are not elsewhere applied and pressed home upon the conscience of some who very earnestly " profess and call themselves Christians," but whose faith, in these particulars, if closely tested, would be found, perchance, to hang around them about as loosely as a tunic of sheer muslin.) But let us see to what extent they may go, even in the case under consideration. For example, Mr. Parker is accused of denying the Resurrection ; and yet he says, " as a miracle, it has more evidence than any other," though, to him, the evidence is incomplete. Again, he is accused of scorning and reviling The Church ; and yet he magnifies the influence of the Church, says " it is greater than even its friends maintain," and then goes on to illustrate, in most eloquent terms, the amount of good it has done or is doing. He is accused of casting ridicule on the Lord's Supper ; and yet, speaking of its original purpose and institution, he says — " It was simple, natural, affectionate, beautiful." He does, indeed, question, whether as a mere form, it was intended to be perpetual or binding on a more spiritual or advanced state of humanity. " Useful, beautiful, comforting to a million souls it may be ;" he says, " truly it has been so." But looking beyond the mere sign, to the spiritual purpose signified, he continues — " It is not that we need new forms and symbols, or even the rejection of the old. Baptism and the Supper are still beautiful and comforting to many a soul. A spiritual man

can put spirit upon these. To many they are still powerful auxiliaries. They commune with God, through bread and wine, as others hold converse with him through the symbols of nature — the winds that wake the ‘soft and soul-like sound of the pine tree’ — through the earliest violets of spring, and the last leaf of autumn; through calm and storm, and stars, and blooming trees, and winter’s snows, and summer’s sunshine. A religious soul never lacks symbols of its own — elements of communion with God. What we want is the SOUL of Religion, its SIGN will take care of itself; Religion that thinks and works.” Yes, — “We want real Christianity, the Absolute Religion, preached with faith and applied to life: — BEING GOOD AND DOING GOOD.” Here, then, is the secret of Mr. Parker’s power and popularity, and, no less, we may say of his unpopularity, — that he cuts clear through the existing meshes and humanized forms of religion in his anxiety to realize the living spirit. He would demolish nothing of the absolute but only that which seems to him arbitrary, and superficial, or of human origin. He longs to have men forsake what he deems their own “cunningly devised fables” and fall back on the original, pure, primitive “truth,” as it was and “is in Jesus.” He burns with a reformer’s anxiety to see men less worldly, less inert, less “subject to ordinances” and the mere “paying of tithes,” and more alive to the duty of living Christlike. In the words of another, “Looking upon the world lying in sin and wretchedness around him, with these sins organized into institutions that oppress and degrade and even obliterate the image of God originally stamped upon man’s nature, he is filled with a mighty indignation which cries aloud and spares not. The Law of Holiness — as Jesus exhibited it, in action — this is the law for every mortal man; from which he cannot, and ought not to wish to escape. To wish to escape its utmost requisitions, is, in his view, the sin against the Holy Ghost.”

“It is no wonder that the assertion of this tremendous doctrine, deduced from the common premises with iron-linked logic, and uttered with all the fervor of conviction, should strike into the preachers of Unitarianism terror or rage, according to their several characters; and awaken their congregations to ask, whether this young man is a babbler and false prophet, or whether their ministers have been recreant to their duty in letting them sleep in a

false sense of peace.”\* He does indeed hack away, as with a two-edged sword or a battle-axe, upon the scaffolding which surrounds and hides, as he thinks, the temple and citadel of a true godliness; and brings the battering engine of his argument to bear boldly upon what he calls “the rotten walls of the Church,” as it *is*, *under human organizations*. But why all this jealousy of such accusations, why all this outcry and shrieking remonstrance and calling out for “quarter,” by those *within* those walls, if they are really so strong? A truly impregnable fortress is not apt to give out thus the sounds of alarm, when besieged, — no, not even when struck upon by “the hammer which breaketh the rock in pieces;” and, therefore, the presumption is that the beleaguered do not feel over-confident or courageous as to the real strength of their munitions. Time will show whether a breach is not yet to be made in them. It will also show that all Mr. Parker’s battling is against hypocritical formalities and human pretensions to religion, not religion itself; against make-believe Christianity, not real Christianity; against misrepresentations and perversions of the truth, not the truth itself; against human formularies, interpolations, and distortions of the faith, not that “once delivered to the saints;” and never against “the man Christ Jesus,” but always, and well, and wisely, against the men of straw and the dogmatical counterfeits which a sectarian influence would set up in His stead. And still more nobly does he battle it against vice and hypocrisy, temporizing bigotry and deceit, the sins of the time and the sins of the temple, “the idols of the market-place, the cave, and the den,” wheresoever concealed or enthroned, whether in high places or in low; and in such a conflict we may well wish him God speed. His earnest aspirations for “some new manifestation of the Christian faith that shall stir men’s hearts as they were never stirred; some better life that shall realize the word of Christ and give us the Comforter,” may well find a response in our bosoms. Hear the words of wailing and of truthfulness in which he utters his hope, and his conviction of such need of a better day: — “There are Simeons enough in the cottages and churches of New England, plain men and pious women, who wait for the consolation, and would die in gladness, if their expiring breath could stir quicker the wings that bear him on. There are

\* See an Article in the Boston Quarterly for April, 1842.

men enough, sick and bowed down, in no wise able to lift up themselves, who would be healed could they kiss the hand of their Saviour or touch but the hem of his garment; men who look up and are not fed, because they ask bread from heaven and water from the rock — not traditions or fancies, Jewish or Heathen, or new or old; men enough, who, with throbbing hearts, pray for the spirit of healing to come upon the waters which other than angels have long kept in trouble; men enough who have lain long time sick of theology, nothing bettered by many physicians, and are now dead, too dead to bury their dead, who would come out of their graves at the glad tidings. God send us a real religious life, which shall pluck blindness out of the heart, and make us better fathers, mothers, and children; a religious life that shall go with us where we go, and make every home the house of God, every act acceptable as a prayer. We would work for this and pray for it, though we wept tears of blood while we prayed."

Is it a question, now, whether these doctrines of hope and duty, so fearlessly advocated by Mr. Parker, are to be admitted to our pulpits? And wherefore should they not? They are his *predominating* views, and, being so, it is fair to presume — indeed experience sufficiently demonstrates — that he makes *these* the burden of his preaching. Why all this outcry of alarm then, lest, when he enter the pulpit he should break it down by preaching something else which does *not* represent his prevailing idea? A poor compliment, verily, is that which these alarmists thus pay to their own faith and charity! And is it always a concern for Christian truth which underlies the opposition to Mr. Parker? It is easy to get up an excitement against the man who sends a bomb-shell point blank into the citadel of our conscience, and to ring an alarm against the reformer who jostles us in our conservative position of ease; and, by viewing his peculiarities through a magnifying glass, and saying little as possible of his merits, we may even come to think, and make others think, he is a very Corypheus of infidelity, and made up of nothing but defects, —

"Monstrum horrendum, informe, — cui lumen ademptum."

We may gather quite a cluster of ugly heresies, if we will, out of his writings, and coil them up within the alcoholic vials of our



wrath, like the venomous reptiles immersed in spirit within the glass jars of a museum, (their poison being all hermetically sealed over) and then—to all who are willing to commend our skill, and pay for the exhibition, we may say, “There! You see what he is. Only look at his fangs!” So the writer of the letter now under our notice, having concentrated the venom of his heretic in the compass of two pages,—having counted off the rattles of his reptile,—forewarns us that some do not seem to know the nature of his fascinations, nor how dangerous his attack! “There are some in the community,” says he, “who seem to consider that the independence or sincerity of a Christian minister is to be doubted, if he does not welcome these doctrines into his pulpit. I believe such a thought can find a home in few breasts except such as are strangers to the views themselves.” We might well retort here, and say, the independence and sincerity of any Christian minister might well be doubted if he does *not* welcome into his pulpit *such* views, as, in this communication, we have offset against those which Mr. Waterston has enumerated. And then as to the question who is or is not a stranger to Mr. Parker’s views? When we come to the actual issues of the case, we incline to think the real ignorance (or at any rate the real want of charity, which is *worse* than ignorance,) will oftenest be found on the side of those who oppose and denounce Mr. Parker. The writer of this has taken occasion, within the last week or two, to review and study all Mr. Parker’s writings, for the third or fourth time. But how stands the matter on the side with those whose opposition to Mr. Parker is so unqualified? We hear it repeatedly said by many who are disaffected towards Mr. Parker, that they never read any of his writings,—“Oh, no! and do not wish to, nor do they mean to;” and yet they have the presumption to pronounce unmitigated judgment upon him. Here, for instance, we have a lawyer (not Gamaliel certainly) who is reported to have said that he “never saw Mr. Parker, nor heard him preach, nor read any of his writings;” and yet *he*, (O wondrous consistency in one who is called to weigh evidence)—*he*, the advocate of justice, skilled in the legalities, has presumed, if report speak true, to pass a solemn verdict before he has even impanelled the jury, heard the witnesses, or weighed a particle of their testimony. “FIAT JUSTITIA!” And, still more wonderful, he himself,

it is said, has occupied the pulpit from which he would exclude Mr. Parker. So much for "liberty of the pulpit!" Verily it comes with an ill grace from those who have sat, by courtesy, in a better than "Moses's seat," to question the right of other prophets, quite as good as they, to sit or stand in the same place. And no less graceless an errand was it in such to favor a secession of the disaffected from a peaceable and well compacted church. Time was when the members of that church were called, as in jealous derision, "the Come-Outers:" (a title which is getting to be complimentary) — and what shall we now say of those who would come out even from *these*? They are still farther out, — the very "outrés" of the outermost. And who are they that pretend so harshly to denounce an honest man for the honest exercise of his thought and speech? Ay, and who are they who claim to be the umpires of what *is* absolutely true?

"Who among men, Great Lord of all!  
Thy servant to his bar shall call?  
Judge him, for modes of faith, thy foe,  
And doom him to the realms of woe?"

Doubtless, in the sight of God and the angels, many a so-called heretic has a larger faith, a purer soul, and a better prospect of heaven than nine-tenths of those who denounce and exaggerate his views. "Oh yes," say they, "no doubt it may be so. He may be a much better Christian in *character* than we, — more Godlike, Christlike, and everything else, — 'accepted of God' if you will, welcomed even to the *presence* of God; but that is no reason he should be admitted to our *pulpits*, even though he be a recognized teacher of Christian truth — if he differ from us in *opinion*. No matter what God accepts; we accept no man but for his creed." This is the substance of the argument often used; and, ah! here is the false ground of fellowship, we might rather say the rigid principle of separation, which is fast sundering the Saviour's household, shattering Christendom into a thousand fragments, multiplying its partition walls, casting its morality to the winds, and covering, under the broad mantle of the Church and its rituals, those base and shameless immoralities which make the spirit of a "pure and undefiled religion" hang her head, and weep, and wring her hands in agony. Thus it is, because of the disproportionate influence

allowed to men's *opinions* in religion, that we see so much indifference, comparatively, in regard to *practice*. Thus it is we see them leaning on the crutches of speculation rather than the staff of their obligations to a godly life. Thus it is that lust, avarice, and fraud are often suffered to run riot almost up to the very altar of the sanctuary and lay hold of its horns with only a qualified rebuke, while meek heresy is waylaid at the porch, arraigned before a "concio ad clerum" and put in irons without so much as a hearing. Thus we see men all around us taking fire by the sparks struck out of their own scimitars; full of hot prejudice, and violent enough — the most violent of all, in their outcries of contempt against the views of a heresiarch; threatening to leave the church wherever such a man preaches; and yet God alone knows how much better than he, in regard to faith or practice, any one of us would appear if "weighed in the balance." Are these the men to estimate or excommunicate him who labors for that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord?" Well might we apply to them the questions — "Why dost thou judge thy brother? and why dost thou set at naught thy brother?" And now, perchance, it may be argued that the writer of this is "hand in glove" with all Mr. Parker's speculations, because he has chosen thus to speak a word in favor of his claim to be treated fairly. If so, the reasoners upon such a premise are welcome to their logic, while their *conclusion* is respectfully denied.

But we have done. The writer of the letter under our notice, says, that "any measure which interferes with the proper liberty of the pulpit should be sacredly resisted," and therefore we have resisted his letter; "and anything like unchristian exclusion should be met with an earnest protest," — but where is his protest? I suppose he will not deny that Mr. Parker is now, and henceforth, and forever, excluded from the pulpit of Pitts Street Chapel; and that he, the pastor of that chapel, assents to that exclusion? Will he say that such exclusion is not unchristian; or at least intolerant, and so far unchristian? On what ground will he say this? Let it be remembered that Mr. Parker is a *Christian minister*, or at least claiming so to be; and who shall dare deny him the title which he claims? He is a *Unitarian* minister, claiming so to be; and who shall question his right so to consider himself?

Nay, further, — he is a member of that fraternity, or association, to which Mr. Waterston himself belongs, and the crowning interest of whose fellowship is, or has been, the freest liberty of thought and the frankest concession of the Christian name to every one who claims it. How, then, or with what consistency, can Mr. Waterston deny to Mr. Parker (as he does in effect by his letter) the Christian name? — for this is the point. He does not pretend to say that his unwillingness to exchange with Mr. P. is founded on any other considerations than his infidelity, as he understands it. He does not say that he closes his pulpit against him because, as a matter of convenience or taste, he prefers not to exchange at all; but he takes distinct issue with him, in this letter, on the ground of his title to enter a Christian pulpit. He makes out a formal indictment, by an array of negative epithets and theorems taken out of his book, and out of their connection in his book, as if to neutralize the attractive pole of the magnet; and therefore, we say his accusations are unfair and one-sided. At all events they are irreconcilable with that principle which Unitarians have always professed to hold — of the utmost toleration towards one another. Mr. Waterston has said, in his letter, “I do not recognize any new feature, at the present time, from what we have always maintained, respecting liberality of sentiment and the freedom of the pulpit.” And yet he must be well aware that, so far as *opinions* are concerned, Unitarians have never affixed the least reservation to their terms of fellowship. They have heretofore acknowledged all to be Christian teachers who claimed so to be; not even presuming (by any absolute terms) to define who is or is not a Christian upon *doctrinal* grounds, except so far as to require, in some sense, a belief in Christ. Now this may have been an error in their first principle, or starting point; and they may not have wisely foreseen this crisis to which their principle would lead. They may have stood in a wrong position at the outset, and the “point d’ appui” they selected may have proved a false one. If so, let them say so like men, and come down and define their position like other denominations, — and not be trying to balance themselves on a broken reed, while they wrestle with every one who comes up to the same place, with quite as good a right as they, and are trying to throw him off the platform.



The Unitarians may disown Mr. Parker if they will ; but, in so doing, as we judge, they will disinherit their own child, — the very progeny of their own begetting, — their legitimate offspring, if not their “ well-beloved ; ” for he is as much and truly the fruit of their own primary principles as ever the gnarled oak was the product of a smooth acorn. As a system, Unitarianism began with a solemn protest against all exclusiveness or assumption in matters of faith ; against the arrogance and dogmatism which would make a man’s *creed* or *opinions* merely, the test of his right to be called a Christian. It claimed and asserted for every individual the largest liberty of thought, conscience and speculation, — telling him, even as Christ tells us all, to “ call no man master, on the earth ; ” pointing him to the Scriptures, and to the light within, by which he must read them ; bidding him be faithful and fearless ; leading him up to the Bible, and saying — “ Here, take the Word of God and make what you can of it, in the fear of God. Live its truths, as you can learn them, by yourself. Judge no man, as you shall be judged by none. ‘ Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good ; ’ and remember that to your own Master and Maker, alone, must you stand or fall.” The carrying out of these principles and premises to their uttermost conclusion, has generated, among other results, the views of Mr. Parker. If such a consequence seem to many no better than the edge of a *precipice*, they must remember that for them there is no other alternative but either to overleap it as they can, or go back and round some other way.

“ But no,” say the Unitarians, “ Mr. Parker is not of us.” Well, they may disallow or deny his right to any relationship or connection with them, if they please. They may cut him off ; but, by all that is gracious in the heart of Unitarianism, it will bleed to death out of the very place where the knife of their exclusion is applied. They may say he is only an excrescence, or a nuisance, an offence, or a mushroom, a mere weed in the great garden of their faith. But this is only to condemn themselves ; for, the worse they make *him*, the more feculent they acknowledge the soil, or system, or set of principles out of which he has grown ; for, by all the rules of cause and effect he is theirs, and theirs only.

The fact is, in the view of many, Mr. Parker has now become, as it were, the embodiment of Ultra Unitarianism ; the personification

of its first principles; the full harvest of a liberal theory, run up to seed; the farthest decimal of theological arithmetic. There he is, and we must make the best of it. We cannot so easily shake him off if we would, and we *ought* not if we could. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father,

“ Armed at point and cap a pé,”

he will be ever rising up, now and then, as a retributive admonition to Unitarians — the spectre of their past offences — telling of the wrong which a brother has done him for the sake of a crown, (not by pouring poison into his ears, but the ears of others), and calling on posterity to reverse and revenge, as they will, the wrong he has suffered. In the midnight of our uneasiness he will come, as well he may, and tell of assassinations done by his own kinsmen, while he dreamed of peace, in his own garden; nor will he away, though we cry out never so loudly, at sight of the apparition,

“ Angels, and ministers of grace, defend us ! ”

for he has yet a mission and a baptism, and will be straitened till both are accomplished. The fact is, he has only carried out freedom of thought and inquiry like the rest of us. He has gone up, fearlessly, to the “ultima thule” of liberal investigations. What right have we to blame him for this exercise of his prerogative as a theologian? In his researches he has come, as it were, to the vast cave of unfrequented truth; and, though his voice may ring there like the report of an overloaded gun, we must hear it, and stand the fire as we can, though it be to us as the crack of our doom as a denomination.







THE RELATION OF JESUS TO HIS AGE AND THE AGES.

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

THE THURSDAY LECTURE,

IN BOSTON.

DECEMBER 26, 1844.

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BY THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN ROXBURY.

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BOSTON:

CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN.

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MDCCCXLV.

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## S E R M O N .

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JOHN VII. 48.

“ HAVE ANY OF THE RULERS, OR OF THE PHARISEES, BELIEVED ON HIM ? ”

I ASK your attention to a SERMON OF THE RELATION JESUS BORE TO HIS AGE AND THE AGES.

In all the world there is nothing so remarkable as a great man ; nothing so rare ; nothing which so well repays study. Human nature is loyal at its heart, and is, always and everywhere, looking for this its true earthly sovereign. We sometimes say that our institutions, here in America, do not require a great man ; that we get along better without than with such. But let a real, great man light on our quarter of the planet ; let us understand him, and straightway these democratic hearts of ours burn with admiration and with love. We wave in his words, like corn in the harvest wind. We should rejoice to obey him, for he would speak what we need to hear. Men are always half expecting such a man. But when he comes, the real, great man that God has been preparing, — men are disappointed ; they do not recognize him. He does not enter the city through the gates which expectants had crowded. He is a fresh fact, brand new ; not exactly like any former fact. Therefore men do not recognize

nor acknowledge him. His language is strange, and his form unusual. He looks revolutionary, and pulls down ancient walls to build his own temple, or, at least, splits old rocks asunder, and quarries anew fresh granite and marble.

There are two classes of great men. Now and then some arise whom all acknowledge to be great, soon as they appear. Such men have what is true in relation to the wants and expectations of to-day. They say, what many men wished but had not words for ; they translate into thought what, as a dim sentiment, lay a burning in many a heart, but could not get entirely written out into consciousness. These men find a welcome. Nobody misunderstands them. The world follows at their chariot-wheels, and flings up its cap and shouts its huzzas, — for the world is loyal, and follows its king when it sees and knows him. The good part of the world follows the highest man it comprehends ; the bad, whoever serves its turn.

Now there is another class of men so great, that all cannot see their greatness. They are in advance of men's conjectures, higher than their dreams ; too good to be actual, think some. Therefore, say many, there must be some mistake ; this man is not so great as he seems, nay, he is no great man at all, but an impostor. These men have what is true not merely in relation to the wants and expectations of men here and to-day ; but what is true in relation to the Universe, to Eternity, to God. They do not speak what you and I have been trying to say, and cannot ; but what we shall one day, years hence, wish to say, after we have improved and grown up to man's estate.

Now it seems to me, the men of this latter class, when they come, can never meet the approbation of the censors and guides of public opinion. Such as wished for a new great man had a superstition of the last one in their minds. They expected the new to be just like the old, but he is altogether



unlike. Nature is rich, but not rich enough to waste anything. So there are never two great men very strongly similar. Nay, this new great man, perhaps, begins by destroying much that the old one built up with tears and prayers. He shows, at first, the limitations and defects of the former great man ; calls in question his authority. He refuses all masters ; bows not to tradition, and with seeming irreverence, laughs in the face of the popular idols. How will the "respectable men," the men of a few good rules and those derived from their fathers, "the best of men and the wisest," — how will they regard this new great man ? They will see nothing remarkable in him except that he is fluent and superficial, dangerous and revolutionary. He disturbs their notions of order ; he shows that the institutions of society are not perfect ; that their imperfections are not of granite or marble, but only of words written on soft wax, which may be erased and others written thereon anew. He shows that such imperfect institutions are less than one great man. The guides and censors of public opinion will not honor such a man, they will hate him. Why not ? Some others, not half so well bred, nor well furnished with precedents, welcome the new great man ; welcome his ideas ; welcome his person. They say, "Behold a Prophet."

When Jesus, the son of Mary, a poor woman, wife of Joseph, the carpenter, in the little town of Nazareth, when he "began to be about thirty years old," and began also to open his mouth in the synagogues and the highways, nobody thought him a great man at all, as it seems. "Who are you ?" said the guardians of public opinion. He found men expecting a great man. This, it seems, was the common opinion that a great man was to arise, and save the Church, and save the State. They looked back to Moses, a divine man of antiquity, whose great life had passed into the world, and to whom men had done honor, in various ways ; amongst

others, by telling all sorts of wonders he wrought, and declaring that none could be so great again ; none get so near to God. They looked back also to the prophets, a long line of divine men, so they reckoned, but less than the awful Moses ; his stature was far above the nation, who hid themselves in his shadow. Now the well-instructed children of Abraham thought the next great man must be only a copy of the last, repeat his ideas, and work in the old fashion. Sick men like to be healed by the medicine which helped them the last time ; at least, by the customary drugs which are popular.

In Judea there were then three parties of men, distinctly marked. There were the CONSERVATIVES, — they represented the church, tradition, ecclesiastical or theocratical authority. They adhered to the words of the old books, the forms of the old rites, the tradition of the elders. “Nobody but a Jew can be saved,” said they ; “he only by circumcision, and the keeping of the old formal Law ; God likes that, He accepts nothing else.” These were the PHARISEES, with their servants the Scribes. Of this class were the Priests and the Levites in the main the National party, the Native-Hebrew party of that time. They had tradition, Moses and the prophets ; they believed in tradition, Moses and the prophets, at least in public ; what they believed in private God knew, and so did they. I know nothing of that.

Then there was the INDIFFERENT PARTY ; the SADDUCEES, the State. They had wealth, and they believed in it, both in public and private too. They had a more generous and extensive cultivation than the Pharisees. They had intercourse with foreigners, and understood the writers of Ionia and Athens, which the Pharisee held in abhorrence. These were sleek respectable men, who, in part, disbelieved the Jewish theology. It is no very great merit to disbelieve even in the devil, unless you have a positive faith in God to take up

your affections. The Sadducee believed neither in angel nor resurrection — not at all in the immortality of the soul. He believed in the state, in the laws, the constables, the prisons and the axe. In religious matters the Pharisee had a positive belief, only it was a positive belief in a great mistake. In religious matters, it seems the Sadducee had no positive belief at all; not even in an error, at least, some think so. His distinctive affirmation was but a denial. He believed what he saw with his eyes, touched with his fingers, tasted with his tongue. He never saw, felt nor tasted immortal life—he had no belief therein. There was once a heathen Sadducee who said, “my right arm is my God!”

There was likewise a party of COME-OUTERS. They despaired of the State and the Church too, and turned off into the wilderness, “where the wild asses quench their thirst,” building up their organizations free, as they hoped, from all ancient tyrannies. The Bible says nothing directly of these men in its canonical books. It is a curious omission; but two Jews, each acquainted with foreign writers, Josephus and Philo,—give an account of these. These were the ESENES, an ascetic sect, hostile to marriage—at least, many of them,—who lived in a sort of association by themselves, and had all things common.

Now the Pharisees and the Sadducees had no great living and ruling ideas,—none I mean which represented Man, his hopes, wishes, affections, his aspirations and power of progress. That is no very rare case, perhaps, you will say, for a party in the Church or the State to have no such ideas, but they had not even a plausible substitute for such ideas. They seemed to have no faith in Man—in his divine nature, his power of improvement. The Essenes had ideas; had a positive belief; had faith in Man, but it was weakened in a great measure by their machinery. They, like the Pharisee and the Sadducee, were imprisoned in their organization, and probably saw no good out of their own party lines.

It is a plain thing that no one of these three parties would accept, acknowledge or even perceive the greatness of Jesus of Nazareth. His ideas were not their notions. He was not the man they were looking for ; not at all the Messiah, the anointed one of God, which *they* wanted. The Sadducee expected no new great man unless it was a Roman quæstor, or procurator ; the Pharisees looked for a Pharisee stricter than Gamaliel ; the Essenes for an Ascetic. It is so now. Some seem to think that if Jesus were to come back to the earth, he would preach Unitarian sermons, from a text out of the Bible, and prove his divine mission and the everlasting truths — the truths of necessity that he taught, in the Unitarian way, by telling of the miracles he wrought eighteen hundred years ago ; that he would prove the immortality of the soul by the fact of his own corporeal resurrection. Others seem to think that he would deliver homilies of a severer character ; would rate men roundly about total depravity, and tell of unconditional election, salvation without works, and imputed righteousness, and talk of hell till the women and children fainted, and the knees of men smote together for trembling. Perhaps both would be mistaken.

So it was then. All these three classes of men, imprisoned in their prejudices and superstitions, were hostile. The Pharisees said, “ We know that God spake unto Moses ; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is. He blasphemeth Moses and the prophets ; yea, he hath a devil, and is mad, why hear him ? ” The Sadducees complained that “ he stirred up the people ; ” so he did. The Essenes, no doubt, would have it that he was “ a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber — a friend of publicans and sinners.” Tried by these three standards, the judgment was true ; what could he do to please these three parties ? Nothing ! nothing that he *would* do. So they hated him ; all hated him, and sought to destroy him. The cause is plain. He was so deep they



could not see his profoundness ; too high for their comprehension ; too far before them for their sympathy. He was not the great man of the day. He found all organizations against him ; Church and State. Even John the Baptist — a real prophet, but not *the* prophet — doubted if Jesus was the *ONE* to be followed. If Jesus had spoken for the Pharisees, they would have accepted his speech and the speaker too. Had he favored the Sadducees, he had been a great man in their camp, and Herod would gladly have poured wine for the eloquent Galilean, and have satisfied the carpenter's son with purple and fine linen. Had he praised the Essenes, uttering their Shibboleth, they also would have paid him his price — have made him the head of their association perhaps, at least, have honored him in *their* way. He spoke for none of these. Why should they honor or even tolerate him ? It were strange had they done so. Was it through any fault or deficiency of Jesus that these men refused him ? quite the reverse. The rain falls and the sun shines on the evil and the good ; the work of infinite power, wisdom and goodness is before all men, revealing the invisible things, yet the fool hath said — ay, said in his heart, "THERE IS NO GOD !"

Jesus spoke not for the prejudices of such, and therefore they rejected him. But as he spoke truths for man, truths from God, truths adapted to man's condition there — to man's condition everywhere and always, when the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes went away, their lips curling with scorn ; when they gnashed on one another with their teeth — there were noble men and humble women, who had long awaited the consolation of Israel, and they heard him, heard him gladly. Yes, they left all to follow him. Him ! no, it was not *him* they followed ; it was God in him they obeyed, the God of truth, the God of love.

There were men not counted in the organized sects ; men weary of absurdities ; thirsting for the truth ; sick, they

knew not why nor of what, yet none the less sick, and waiting the angel who should heal them, though by troubled waters and remedies unknown. These men had not the prejudices of a straightly organized and narrow sect. Perhaps they had not its knowledge, or its good manners. They were "unlearned and ignorant men," those early followers of Christ. Nay, Jesus himself had no extraordinary culture—as the world judges of such things. His townsmen wondered, on a famous occasion, how he had learned to read. He knew little of theologies, it would seem; the better for him, perhaps. No doubt the better for us that he insisted on none. He knew they were not religion. The men of Galilee did not need theology. The youngest scribe in the humblest theological school at Jerusalem,—if such a thing was in those days—could have furnished theology enough to believe in a life-time. They did need religion; they did see it as Jesus unfolded its loveliness; they did welcome it when they saw; welcome it in their hearts.

If I were a poet as some are born, and skilled to paint with words what shall stand out as real, to live before the eye, and then dwell in the affectionate memory forever, I would tell of the audience which heard the Sermon on the mount, which listened to the parables, the rebukes, the beautiful beatitudes. They were plain men, and humble women; many of them foolish like you and me; some of them sinners. But they all had hearts; had souls, all of them—hearts made to love, souls expectant of truth. When he spoke, some said, no doubt, "That is a new thing—that the true worshiper shall worship in spirit and in truth, as well here as in Jerusalem—now as well as any time; that also is a hard saying, Love your enemies; forgive them, though seventy times seven they smite and offend you; that notion that the Law and the Prophets are contained—all that is essentially religious thereof—in one precept, love men as yourself, and God with

all your might. This differs a good deal from the Pharisaic orthodoxy of the synagogue. That is a bold thing, presumptuous and revolutionary to say, I am greater than the temple, wiser than Solomon, a better symbol of God than both." But there was something deeper than Jewish orthodoxy in their hearts ; something that Jewish orthodoxy could not satisfy, and what was yet more troublesome to ecclesiastical guides — something that Jewish orthodoxy could not keep down, nor even cover up. Sinners were converted at his reproof. They felt *he* rebuked whom he loved. Yet his pictures of sin and sinners too, were anything but flattering. There was small comfort in them. Yet it was not the publicans and harlots who laid their hands on the place where their hearts should be, saying, "You hurt our feelings," and "we can't bear you!" Nay, they pondered his words, — repenting in tears. He showed them their sin ; its cause, its consequence, its cure. To them he came as a Saviour, and they said, "Thou art well-come," those penitent Magdalens weeping at his feet.

It would be curious could we know the mingled emotions that swayed the crowd which rolled up around Jesus, following him — as the tides obey the moon — wherever he went ; curious to see how faces looked doubtful at first as he began to speak at Tabor or Gennesareth, Capernaum or Gischala, then how the countenance of some lowered and grew black with thunder suppressed but cherished, while the face of others shone as a branch of stars seen through some disparted cloud in a night of fitful storms — a moment seen and then withdrawn. It were curious to see how gradually many discordant feelings, passion, prejudice and pride were hushed before the tide of melodious religion he poured out around him, baptizing anew saint and sinner, and old and young, into one brotherhood of a common soul, into one immortal service of the universal God ; to see how this young Hebrew maid,

deep-hearted, sensitive, enthusiastic, self-renouncing, intuitive of heavenly truth, rich as a young vine, with clustering affections just purpling into ripeness, — how she seized, first and all at once, the fair Ideal, and with generous bosom confidently embraced it too ; how that old man, gray-bearded, with baldness on his head, full of precepts and precedents, the lore of his fathers, the experience of a hard life, logical, slow, calculating, distrustful, remembering much and fearing much, but hoping little, confiding only in the fixed, his reverence for the old deepening as he himself became of less use, — to see how he received the glad inspirations of the joiner's son, and wondering felt his youth steal slowly back upon his heart, reviving aspirations, long ago forgot, and then the crimson tide of early hope come gushing, tingling on through every limb ; to see how the young man halting between Principle and Passion, not yet petrified into worldliness, but struggling, uncertain, half reluctant, with those two serpents, Custom and Desire, that beautifully twined about his arms and breast and neck, their wormy folds, concealing underneath their burnished scales the dragon's awful strength, the viper's poison fang — the poor youth caressing their snaky crests, and toying with their tongues of flame — to see how he slowly, reluctantly, amid great questionings of heart, drank in the words of truth — and then, obedient to the angel in his heart, shook off, as ropes of sand, that hideous coil and trod the serpents underneath his feet. All this, it were curious, ay, instructive too could we but see.

They heard him with welcome various as their life. The old man said “ It is Moses or Elias, it is Jeremiah, — one of the old prophets arisen from the dead, for God makes none such, now-a-days, in the sterile dotage of mankind.” The young men and maidens doubtless it was that said, “ This is the Christ, the Desire of the nations ; the Hope of the World, the great new Prophet ; the Son of David ; the Son of Man ;



yes, the Son of God. He shall be our King." Human nature is loyal, and follows its king soon as it knows him. Poor lost sheep! the children of men look always for their guide, though so often they look in vain.

How he spoke — words deep and piercing; rebukes for the wicked, doubly rebuking, because felt to have come out from a great, deep, loving heart. His first word was, perhaps, "Repent," but with the assurance that the kingdom of God was here and now, within reach of all. How his doctrines, those great truths of nature, commended themselves to the heart of each, of all simple-souled men looking for the truth! He spoke out of his experience; of course into theirs. He spoke great doctrines, truths vast as the soul, eternal as God, winged with beauty from the loveliness of his own life. Had he spoken for the Jews alone, his words had perished with that people; for that time barely, the echo of his name had died away in his native hamlet; for the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, you and I had heard of him but as a Rabbi; nay, had never been blest by him at all. Words for a nation, an age, a sect, are of use in their place, yet they soon come to nought. But as he spoke for Eternity, his truths ride on the wings of Time; as he spoke for Man, they are welcome, beautiful and blessing wherever Man is found, and so must be till Man and Time shall cease.

He looked not back — as the Pharisee — save for illustrations and examples. He looked forward for his direction. He looked around for his work. There it lay — the harvest plenteous, the laborers few. It is always so. He looked not to men for his Idea — his word to speak — as little for their applause. He looked in, to God, for guidance, wisdom, strength, and as water in the wilderness, at the stroke of Moses, in the Hebrew legend, so inspiration came at his call, a mighty stream of Truth for the nation faint, feeble, afraid, and wandering for the promised land; drink for the thirsty, and cleansing for the unclean.

But he met opposition ; O, yes, enough of it. How could it be otherwise ? It must be so. The very Soul of Peace, he brought a sword. His word was a consuming fire. The Pharisees wanted to be applauded, commended ; to have their sect, their plans, their traditions praised and flattered. His word *to* them was “Repent ;” *of* them, to the people, “such righteousness admits no man to the Kingdom of Heaven ; they are a deceitful prophecy, blind guides, hypocrites ; not sons of Abraham, but children of the Devil.” They could not bear him ; no wonder at it. He was the aggressor ; had carried the war into the very heart of their system. They turned out of their company a man whose blindness he healed, because he confessed that fact. They made a law that all who believed on him, should also be cast out. Well they might hate him — those old Pharisees. His existence was their reproach ; his preaching their trial ; his life with its outward goodness, its piety within, was their condemnation. The man was their ruin and they knew it. The cunning can see their own danger, but it is only men wise in mind, or men simple of heart, that can see their real, permanent safety and defence ; never the cunning, neither then, neither now.

Jesus looked to God for his truth, his great doctrines not his own — private, personal, depending on his idiosyncracies, and therefore only subjectively true, — but God’s, universal, everlasting, the Absolute Religion. I do not know that he did not teach some errors also, along with it. I care not if he did. It is by his truths that I know him, the Absolute Religion he taught and lived ; by his highest sentiments that he is to be appreciated. He had faith in God and obeyed God ; hence his inspiration, great, in proportion to the greater endowment, moral and religious, which God gave him, great likewise in proportion to his perfect obedience. He had faith in Man none the less. Whoever yet had faith in God that

had none in Man? I know not. Surely no inspired prophet. As Jesus had faith in Man, so he spoke to men. Never yet, in the wide world, did a prophet arise, appealing with a noble heart and a noble life to the soul of goodness in Man, but that soul answered to the call. It was so most eminently with Jesus. The Scribes and Pharisees could not understand by what authority he taught. Poor Pharisees! how could they? His phylacteries were no broader than those of another man; nay, perhaps he had no phylacteries at all! nor even a broad-bordered garment. Men did not salute him in the market-place—sandals in hand—with their “Rabbi! Rabbi!” Could such men understand by *what authority* he taught? no more than they dared answer his questions. They that knew him *felt* he had authority quite other than that claimed by the Scribes; the authority of true words, the authority of a noble life; yes, the authority God gives a great moral and religious man. God delegates authority to men just in proportion to their Power of Truth, and their Power of Goodness; to their Being and their Life. So God spoke in Jesus, as he taught the perfect Religion, anticipated, developed, but never yet transcended.

This then was the relation of Jesus to his age; the sectarians cursed him; cursed him by their Gods; rejected him, abused him, persecuted him; sought his life. Yes, they condemned him in the name of God. All evil, says the proverb, begins in that name; much continues to claim it. The Religionists, the sects, the sectarian leaders rejected him, condemned and slew him at the last, hanging his body on a tree. Poor priests of the people, they hoped thereby to stifle that awful soul! they only stilled the body; that soul spoke with a thousand tongues. So in the times of old when the Saturnian day began to dawn, it might be fabled that the old Titanic race—lovers of darkness and haters of the light—essayed to bar the rising morning from the world, and so

heaped Pelion upon Ossa, and Olympus on Pelion ; but first the day sent up his crimson flush upon the cloud — and then his saffron tinge — and next the Sun came peering o'er the loftiest height, magnificently fair — and down the mountain's slanting ridge poured the intolerable day ; meanwhile those triple hills, laboriously piled, came toppling, tumbling down, with lumbering crush, and underneath their ruin hid the helpless giants' grave. So was it with men that sat in Moses' seat. But this people, that “knew not the Law,” and were counted therefore accursed, they welcomed Jesus as they never welcomed the Pharisee, the Sadducee or the Scribe. Ay, hence were their tears. The hierarchical fire burnt not so bright contrasted with the Sun. That people had a Simon Peter, a James and a John, men not free of faults no doubt — the record shows it — but with hearts in their bosoms, which could be kindled, and then could light other hearts. Better still, there were Marthas and Marys among that people who “knew not the Law” and were cursed. They were the mothers of many a church.

The character of Jesus has not changed ; his doctrines are still the same ; but what a change in his relation to the age — nay to the ages. The stone that the builders rejected is indeed become the head of the corner, and its foundation too. He is worshiped as a God. That is the rank assigned him by all but a fraction of the Christian world. It is no wonder. Good men worship the best thing they know — and call it God. What was taught to the mass of men, in those days, better than the character of Christ ? Should they rather worship the Grecian Jove, or the Jehovah of the Jews ? To me it seems the moral attainment of Jesus was above the hierarchical conception of God, as taught at Athens, Rome, Jerusalem. Jesus was the Prince of Peace, the King of Truth, praying for his enemies — “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do !” The Jehovah of the Old



Testament — was awful and stern — a man of war, hating the wicked. The sacerdotal conception of God at Rome and Athens was lower yet. No wonder then, that men soon learned to honor Jesus as a God, and then as God himself. Apostolical and other legends tell of his divine birth, his wondrous power that healed the sick, palsied and crippled, deaf and dumb and blind ; created bread ; turned water into wine, and bid obedient devils come and go, a power that raised the dead. They tell that Nature felt with him, and at his death the strongly sympathizing Sun paused at high noon, and for three hours withheld the day ; that rocks were rent, and opening graves gave up their sainted dead, who trod once more the streets of Zion — the first fruits of them that slept ; they tell too how disappointed Death gave back his prey, and spirit-like, Jesus restored, in flesh and shape the same, passed through the doors shut up, and in a bodily form was taken up to Heaven before the face of men ! Believe men of these things as they will. To me they are not truth and fact — but mythic, symbols and poetry ; the Psalm of praise with which the world's rude heart extols and magnifies its King. It is for his Truth and his Life, his Wisdom, Goodness, Piety, that he is honored in my heart — yes, in the world's heart. It is for this that in his name are churches built, and prayers are prayed ; for this that the best things we know, we honor with his name.

He is the greatest person of the ages ; the proudest achievement of the human race — he taught the Absolute Religion — Love to God and Man. That God has yet greater men in store I doubt not ; to say this is not to detract from the majestic character of Christ, but to affirm the omnipotence of God. When they come, the old contest will be renewed — the living Prophet stoned ; the dead one worshiped. Be that as it may, there are duties he teaches us far different from those most commonly taught. He was the greatest fact

in the whole history of Man. Had he conformed to what was told him of men ; had he counselled only with flesh and blood, he had been nothing but a poor Jew ; the world had lost that rich endowment of religious genius, that richest treasure of religious life, THE GLAD TIDINGS OF THE ONE RELIGION, ABSOLUTE AND TRUE. What if he had said — as others, “none can be greater than Moses — none so great?” He had been a dwarf ; the Spirit of God had faded from his soul ! But he conferred with God, not men ; took counsel of his hopes, not his fears. Working for men, with men, by men, trusting in God, and pure as Truth, he was not scared at the little din of Church or State, and trembled not, though Pilate and Herod were made friends only to crucify him that was a born King of the world. Methinks I hear that lofty spirit say to you or me, Poor Brother, fear not, nor despair. The goodness actual in me is possible for all. God is near thee now as then to me ; rich as ever in truth, as able to create, as willing to inspire. Daily and nightly He showers down his infinitude of light. Open thine eyes to see, thy heart to live. Lo, God is here.

THE EXCELLENCE OF GOODNESS.

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A

S E R M O N

PREACHED IN

THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES,

IN BOSTON,

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1845.

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BY THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN ROXBURY.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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## SERMON.

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2 SAM. XVIII. 27.

“AND THE KING SAID, HE IS A GOOD MAN.”

AT the bottom of all things there is a Law. Things are made to act in a certain manner, and not otherwise. Thus the rock is made to be solid and the water to be fluid, under certain conditions, and not the reverse. This Law, here and everywhere, is perfect. It is the work of God. All Law is the will of God; it is God in action, for God is not a mere abstraction, but is concentered in part, so to say, in the world we look upon. He is not only the other side of the universe, but here; here and now; as much here as anywhere. He is immanent in creation, and yet transcends creation. Suppose all created worlds were struck out of existence, God does not cease to be; does not cease to be *here*, for He transcends all the created worlds. But they cannot exist without God. You cannot, without a contradiction, conceive of them devoid of God, for he is immanent therein. Without his continual presence to preserve, as well as his transient presence to create, they would cease to be. Indeed the existence of these things is, as it were, but a continual creation.

This being so; God being in all, in essence no less than in power, active in each — smallest and greatest — and active too with no let nor hindrance of his Infinity, the World becomes a Revelation of God, so far as these material things

can disclose and reveal the Infinite One. But these are to us only a revelation of something kindred to qualities that are awakened in ourselves. Hence all men do not see the same things revealed therein. The World, or any the smallest particle thereof, reveals God's Power, his Wisdom and his Goodness. It reveals these attributes in just that order to mankind. In the history of our consciousness we come, in the order of time, to understand Force sooner than Wisdom, and that before Goodness. The natural man is before the spiritual man. Mankind represents in its large process the same things which you and I represent in our smaller story. In a few years of our early life we must climb through all the stages which the human race has passed by in its sixty centuries ; else we are not up to the level that Mankind has reached in our day.

Watching the progress of ideas in history, we see that Mankind began as we do, and goes on as we have gone, and first became conscious of God's Power ; next of his Wisdom ; of his Goodness last of all. We see out of us only what we are internally prepared to see ; for seeing depends on the harmony between the object without and your own condition within. Hence no two of us see the same things in the sun, and moon and stars ; hence some men see only God's Power in the world, others his Wisdom also, and others still his Goodness crowning all the rest.

Had we some active quality as much transcending Goodness, as that surpasses physical force, we should see in the world, I doubt not, still further revelations of God ; qualities higher than Goodness. In Him there may be, must be, other abilities greater than Goodness, only you and I can now have no conception thereof, not having analogous qualities active in ourselves. It is by no means to be supposed that our ideas of God exhaust the character and nature of God ; nor even that the material world reveals now to us all of Him which it might reveal had we a higher nature, or a larger development

of the nature we have. The limit of our finite comprehension is no bound to the Infinite God. If a Bear were to look at a watch, he might notice the glitter of the metal, perhaps attend to its constant click. But the *contrivance* of the watch he would not see, nor yet its *use*, not having in himself the qualities to appreciate, or even apprehend that contrivance or that use. How inadequate a conception must he have both of the watch and the man who made it ! So it is with us in our application of the World, and its Maker. We are all in this respect but as Bears.

Now men admire in God what they admire in themselves. It is so unavoidably. You may see three periods in man's history. In the first *bodily force* is most highly prized. Here the Hero is the strongest man ; he who can run the swiftest, and strike the hardest ; is fearless and cruel. In that state, men conceive mostly of a God of Force. He is a man of War. He thunders and lightens. He rides on the wind ; is painted with thunderbolts in his hand. He sends the Plague and Famine. The wheels of his chariot rattle in war. What represents Force is a type of Him. In some primitive nations their name of God meant only the STRONG—the POWERFUL.

Then as men advance a little, there comes a period in which *intellectual power* or Wisdom, is prized above bodily force. Men esteem its superiority, for they see that one wise head is a match for many strong bodies. It can command ten weak men to overcome a strong one, whom singly they dared not touch ; but no aggregation of foolish men, however numerous, can ever outwit a single wise man, for no combination of many little follies can ever produce wisdom. In this stage, he is the hero who has the most intellectual power ; knows the secrets of nature ; has skill to rule men ; speaks wise sayings. Saul, the tallest man, has given place to Solomon, the wisest man. The popular conception of God changes to suit this stage of growth. Men see His Wis-

dom ; they see it in the birth of a child, in the course of the sun and moon ; in the return of the seasons ; in the instinct of the emmet or the ostrich : God works the wonders of nature. Wisdom is the chief attribute in this age ascribed to God. *Who shall teach Him ?* says the contemplative man of this age — where the sage of a former day would have asked, *who can overcome Him ?*

There comes yet another period, in which *moral power* is appreciated. He is the hero who sees moral truth ; walks uprightly ; subordinates his private will to the universal law ; tells the truth ; is reverent and pious ; loves goodness and lives it. The Saint has become the Hero ; he rules not by superior power of Hand, or superior power of Head, but by superior power of Heart — by Justice, Truth and Love ; in one word, by Righteousness. “The Queen of Sheba came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon,” said Jesus, “but behold a greater than Solomon is here.” In this period, men form a higher conception of God. Men believe that he is not only wise, but good ; He loves men ; He loves justice, goodness, truth ; demands goodness and not sacrifice ; He keeps his word and is an upright God. He is no longer regarded as the God of the Mosaic law, jealous, revengeful, exacting ; but as a Father of infinite goodness. In one word, God is Love. He is not a man of war, nor a worker of wonders barely, but a Saviour. The Jewish name of God — Jehovah — does not appear in the New Testament ! Read the Old Testament and New Testament in connection, you will see this twofold progress in the state of man, and these divergent conceptions of God. However, you will not find them distinctly separated, as in this sketch ; you must estimate them by their centre and type, not by their circumference, for in nature and in human affairs there are no *classes* of things, but only individuals, which we group into classes for convenience in understanding their relations one to another. But these facts are suggestive to such as think.



It was said there is a Law at the bottom of all things ; that this law is the will of God, who is immanent in nature, and yet transcends nature ; that it is God in action. The same rule holds good in relation to mankind. Here also is a law. God is immanent in man as much as in nature, yet as much transcending man. This is a doctrine of the Bible, and appears in various forms in all the more spiritual sects of Christians. But we are conscious and free, having power to keep the law, or, to a certain extent, to violate it ; we are not merely to be governed as the material world — but to be *self-governed*. As conscious and free beings it is our duty to keep this law ; to keep it knowingly and voluntarily, not merely because we *should* as duty, but, also and no less, because we *would* as desire ; thus bringing the whole of our nature into obedience to God. This our duty is our welfare too. Now Goodness is the keeping of this law ; the keeping thereof knowingly and joyfully, with the hand, with the head, with the heart. Goodness is conformity with God in the matter of self-government. In its highest form it is a *conscious* conformity therewith, and so is Religion. The good man puts himself in a line with God ; in unison with Him. He accords with God, and works after where God has worked before. In the matter of self-government he is consciously one with God ; for God's law acts through him, and by him, with no let nor hindrance.

Now we do not always appreciate the excellence of Goodness. We seldom believe in its power. Mankind has been struggling here on the earth six thousand years — perhaps much longer, — who knows ? Yet even now, few men see more than signs of God's Power and Wisdom in the world. Most men stop at the first. The force of muscles they understand better than the force of mind, and that better than the excellence of justice, uprightness, truth and love. So it has become a political maxim to trust a man of able intellect, sooner than a just and good man of humbler mind.

Most men, perhaps, tremble before a God who can destroy the world to-morrow, and send babes new-born to endless hell, far more than they rejoice in a God who rules by perfect justice, truth and love, who to-day blesses whatever he has made, and will at last bless them all more abundantly than thought can fancy or heart can wish.

We bow before the man of great capabilities of thought, of energetic mind, of deep creative genius. Yet is the good man greater than the wise man — taking wisdom in its common sense of intellectual power, capacity of thought ; — greater and nobler far ! He rests on a greater idea. He lives in a larger and loftier sentiment. Yet I would not undervalue intellectual power. Who of us does not reverence a man that has the understanding of things ; whose capacious mind grasps up the wonders of this earth, its animals and plants, its stones and trees ; who measures the heavens, and tells the wonders of the stars, the open secret of the universe ; knows the story of man ; is possessed of the ideas that rule the world ; has gathered the wisdom of the past, and feels that of the present throb mightily within his heart ? Who does not honor that capaciousness of thought, which sees events in their causes ; can rule a nation as you your household, forecasting its mighty destinies and that for centuries of years, and moulding the fate of millions yet to come ? Who does not appreciate the man who can speak what all feel, but feel dumbly, and can't express ; who enchants us with great thoughts which we know to be our own, but could not say them ; the man who holds the crowd, or the nation, breathless, pausing at his thought, and sways them to and fro as sway the waters underneath the moon ? Who will not honor the poetic mind which tells the tale of our life, and paints to us in rythmic speech the rocks, the trees, the wind singing melodious in every pine, the brook melting adown its sinuous course ; which tells anew the story of our hopes and fears, our passions, tears and loves, and paints the man so

very like, he trembles but to recognize himself? Who does not honor the man of vast mind, that concentrates in himself the ideas and sentiments of an age, and shoots them forth far on into the darkness of the coming time, a stream of light, dazzling and electric too, where millions come and light their little torch, and kindle with its touch their household fire? I would not undervalue this power of thought, the mind's creative skill. It is not the meanest ambition to seek to rise above the mass of men in this, and rule not o'er their bodies but o'er their minds, by power of thought, and live a king for many a hundred years. It is the last infirmity of noble men. There is a magnificence, in force of mind which may well bid us all look up to admire, and bow down to do homage. It is vast and awful even when alone, not wedded with a noble heart. I would be the last to undervalue this.

But it is little compared to the power of Goodness—the resting, living in those ever fair ideas which we call Justice, Right, Religion, Truth,—it is very little and very poor. In time we confess it is so of each great, but wicked man of thought. Men who stood aghast, awed by the terrific mind of Cæsar, of Cromwell, of Napoleon, come at length to see that a single good man, who conforms with God, yields to no temptation, harbors no revenge,—not railing when mocked at, not paying back scorn for scorn; who is able to stand alone amid the desertion of friends, and the ribald mockery of the public mind, serenely lifting up a forehead blameless and unabashed to men and God; he who lives in the law of the Just, the Good, the Holy and the True—he is greater than all Cæsars, all Cromwells, all Napoleons. His power is real, not depending on the accident of a throne or an army, and as the most ancient Heaven, is permanent and strong, resting on the same foundation with them—the law of God. He lives in his undying powers.

Ask yourself what is it that makes you admire this or that great man? Is it what is highest in you, or what is lowest?

Is it your best quality? If not, then is your admiration not of the best things in man, for the quality you admire in him is only an enlargement of the same quality in yourself. Your little honors his much, and if your little is not of your best, no more is his much. It is dangerous to admire what it is not safe to love.

Now all things in nature league with the good man ; her symbols and her soothing influence are on virtue's side. So are the highest sentiments that flash as lightning on your mind in some great hour — the sunrise of the soul. Goodness unites all men. It hinders no other man's goodness, for it is not selfish ; rests on nothing private, personal to you or me, but on what is universal, patent to the world. It is Badness that separates ; makes man afraid of his brother, jealous, and exclusive. Badness rests on somewhat private, and personal to you and me. It seeks its own ; only its own welfare. There cannot be a community of misers and cut-throats. They must lay aside their miserly and murderous principles before they can live together. Birds of prey never go in flocks ; they are grasping, each takes before the other. It is a social nature that unites in groups the harmless sheep, the ox, the horse. It is not this, but famine, stern necessity, that crowds hyænas and wolves together into bands, when they would bring down some beast of noble mark. Spiders cannot work together, harmonious as silk worms. They bite and devour one another.<sup>1</sup>

When a good man commences his career of Goodness, skeptics will doubt, and bigots will oppose him. These men have no faith in Goodness, only in cunning or in force. But the great heart of mankind will beat with him. Even men indented to sin will forsake their old tyrants, and welcome him

<sup>1</sup> It is said that some French philosophers, irreligiously disregarding this hint of nature, shut up a great quantity of spiders, in hopes of obtaining a material finer than silk, and in quantities proportionate to the spider's energy. But the spiders quarreled more than they spun, and in a few days there was but one spider left.



to their arms, confessing their former life a mistake and a grievous curse. By-and-by the world rolls round to his side, and the longer it stands the more will his ideas prevail, for the world is going a pilgrimage towards the Truth.

The secret history of the world is a contest between ideas of Goodness and Badness. We sometimes think it is all over with Goodness ; but it gets the better continually. What is bad dies out, perishing slowly in the ages. What is good lives forever. A truth is never obsolete. All nature is really leagued against selfishness ; for God is the author of nature, and *there* is no Devil. A selfish nation digs its own grave ; if strong it digs it all the deeper, and the more secure. That is the lesson which Rome teaches the world. A selfish party in the nation does the same thing. A selfish man in society seems to succeed, but his success is ruin. He has poisoned his own bread. For all that is ill got he must pay back tenfold. God is not mocked. The man laughs that he has escaped a duty. Poor, blind man ! A curse has fallen on him ; it cleaves to his bones. Justice has feet like wool, so noiseless you hear not her steps ; but her hands are hands of iron, and where God lays them down it is not in man to lift them up.

A moral man, from the height of his idea, looks down on the world and sees the cause, process and result of all this. He sees that the bad man has conjured up a fiend to stand always beside him, corrupting his dainties ; while all the foes that attack a good man are by the magic wand of his Goodness, transformed to angels which encamp about his dwelling-place to guard him from Sloth and Pride. For all good actions, sentiments and thoughts a tenfold recompense is paid him here. We all know the history of Cæsar, the fortunes of Cromwell, the story of Napoleon — men that towered over the world as giants of vast intellectual force of comparatively little goodness ; of little power of heart. What if one had the head of Napoleon, and the heart of Fenelon ;

if such an one should rise amongst us ; should be a senator of these United States, their president ; what an effect would it have on us ; on the nations of the world ; on millions yet unborn ! What a monument would he build — that should last perennially fair when the Pyramids shall have crumbled into dust ; what a furrow of light would his name leave behind him in the world ! How would he elevate our notions of a man — yes, our notions of God ! To be ruled by such an one would be the beginning of freedom. What advance should we make in the qualities of a man ! Nature would be on his side, and God none the less. If it be not the meanest ambition to rule over men's minds by the power of thought — but a great excellency, as the world goes, — what shall be said of the desire to live in men's hearts by the magic of Goodness ; the ambition to lead all men to be brothers, to conform with God, to live by his Law, and be blessed by the freedom of obedience, and so be one with Him ? Why, words cannot paint the excellence of that zeal of a seraphic soul.

Goodness is the service of God. The good Heart, the good Life are the best, the only sacrifice that He demands. When men saw mainly the power of God, trembling thereat, they made sacrifice of things dearest to them — to bribe their God, as to appease a cruel king. “ Come not empty-handed before thy God,” said the priest. Even now, many a man who sees also the Wisdom of God, and bows before Him as the soul of thought, will sacrifice reason, conscience and good sense, as Abraham would offer Isaac, and as Solomon slew sheep and goats. They think God loves tears and hates smiles, so they pay him with gloom, gloomy Sundays and gloomy weeks, and most despairing and melancholy prayers. How many think Religion to consist of this ! Belief is the sign of their Christianity and its only proof ! No doubt there are, practically speaking, two parts of Religion : Piety the

sentiment, Morality the expression, a revelation of that sentiment, as the World is a revelation of God. Piety is the in-ness of Morality, as Morality is the out-ness of Piety. No doubt there are two parts of service to God, namely, Faith and Love within the man, Works and Goodness without the man. If faithful Love be in the man, works of Goodness must needs appear in his manifested life. If not, who shall assure us that Faith and Love exist within? A good tree is known by its good fruit. It is of more importance that the tree be good, than it be called by a good name.

Now one of the sacramental sins of the Christian Churches, has been to lay the main stress on expressions of faith, on Devotion, or Belief. If they laid the main stress on real Piety that were well, for it would be making the tree good, when of course its fruit would be also good. Piety is love of God with the mind and heart; he who has this must conform to God in his self-government, so far as he knows God's will. But Piety cannot be forced. It eludes the eye. It will not be commanded nor obey the voice of the charmer. So the churches early insisted that Belief and Devotion were the main things of Christianity. They told men what to believe — how to be devout. They gave men a creed for their belief, and a form or a rite for their devotion. The whole thing was brought into the outer court — placed under the eye of the Priest. Behold Christianity made easy; the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, and God's Goodness too become a stumbling-block and foolishness to the Christians themselves! None was accounted a Christian but a Conformist to the ways of man. He only was a Christian who believed the popular creed, and complied with the popular form. The Absolute Religion of Christ had passed away from the churches; the sectarianism of the priesthood had usurped its place. Goodness was cheated of its due. In the name of Christ was it taught that a good man might be damned; he had kept the Law of God, as reason and conscience make

it known ; he had been faithful to God and true and loving to man ; he had believed all things that to him were credible, and done prayerfully the duty of a man. "What of that," said the priest, "he has not believed nor worshiped with the rest of men. Hell waiteth for such." Would to God I could say that these things only *were* ; that they *are* not. It has for many a hundred years been a heresy in the christian churches, to believe that a man goes to heaven on account of his goodness, his righteousness, or is acceptable to God because he walks manfully by the light God gives him ! *Has been*, did I say ? Far worse, it is so now ! It is a heresy to believe it now in all popular and recognized churches of Christendom ! A creed and a rite are of course but external — only the gold of the altar — not the altar sanctifying the gold. Once they were symbols, perhaps, and signs of all good things to some pious man. They helped him to commune with God. They aided him to grow. Losing their first estate, to many they become not stimulants of goodness, but substitutes for it. The man rests at the symbol and learns no more !

It was so in Judea when Christ came into the world. No nation of old time surpassed the Jews in their concern for external rites of devotion. No modern nation has equaled them in this. But they were not a good and moral nation ; they were not then, and are not now. They were always hated — not without some reason. Let us do them justice for their marvellous merits, but not be blind to their faults. Christ found that in the popular faith Goodness and Religion were quite different things. Men thought that God was to be served by rites and beliefs. So the priests had taught, making religion consist in what was useless to God and man ; — a wretched science with the few, a paltry ceremony with the mass. Not so did the Prophets teach, for Priests and Prophets are never agreed. Christ fell back on Goodness. He demanded this, he set forth its greatness, its



power, in his words and in his life. He encumbered no man with creeds, nor rites. He said, "He that doeth the will of my Father shall know of the doctrine." He summed up the essentials of Religion in a few things, a right heart, and a right life, in Piety and Goodness. He knew they would extend, and that swiftly, to many things. Moses and the Law might go their way; they had authority to bind no man. His words were their own evidence and proof; moral truth is its own witness. He had authority. Whence came it? From the Scribes and the Priests? They hated him. From tradition, Moses, the Old Testament? Quite as little. He put them behind him. He had authority because he conformed to God's Law, in his mind and in his heart, and in his life. So God spoke through him; inspiration came; and though his friends forsook him, and Church and State rose in tumult, clamorous for his overthrow; though the world turned against him, and he stood alone, he was not alone — better than Friends, and Church, and State, and World, better than twelve legions of Angels, the Father was with him, and he fell not!

Even publicans and harlots welcomed him. They did not love Sin. They had been deluded into its service; they found it a hard master. Joyfully they deserted that hopeless Armada to sail the seas with God, soon as one came who put the heart, conscience, reason on religion's side, speaking with an authority they felt before they saw, showing that religion was real and dear. Humble men saw the mystery of Godliness, they felt the power of Goodness which streamed forth from their brother's heart of fire. They started to found a Church on Goodness, on Absolute Religion, little knowing what they did. Alas it was a poor Church which men founded in that great name, though the best the world ever saw; it was little compared with the ideas of Jesus; little and poor compared with the excellence of Goodness and the power of real Religion.

Some day there will be churches built in which it shall be taught that the only outward service God asks is Goodness, and Truth the only creed ; that a Divine Life — piety in the heart, and Morality in the hand — is the only real worship. Men will use symbols or not, as they like ; perhaps will still cling to such as have helped us hitherto ; perhaps leave them all behind, and have communion with man in work, and word, and joyful sympathy, with God through the elements of earth, and air, and water, and the sky ; or in a serener hour, without these elements, come nearer yet to Him. But in that day will men forget Jesus — the son of Joseph, the carpenter, whom the priests slew — as a madman and an infidel ; but whom the world has worshiped as a God ? Will his thought, his sentiments, his influence pass away ? No ! oh no. What rests on the ideas of God, lasts with those ideas. Power shall vanish ; glory shall pass away ; England and America may become as Nineveh and Babylon. Yes, the incessant hand of Time may smooth down the ruggedness of the Alleghany and the Andes, but so long as man is man must these truths of Jesus live ; Religion be the love of man, the love of God. Men will not name Jesus God ; they may not call him Master, but the world's Teacher. They will love him as their great Brother, who taught the Truth, and lived the life of Heaven here ; who broke the fetters of the oppressed, and healed the bruises of the sick, and blessed the souls of all. Then will Goodness appear more transcendent, and he will be deemed the best Christian who is most like Christ ; most excelling in Truth, Piety and Goodness. They will not be the preachers who bind, but they who loose mankind ; who are full of truth ; who live great noble lives, and walk with Goodness and with God. Worship will be fresh and natural as the rising sun — beautiful like that, and full of promise too. Truth for the creed ; Goodness for the form ; Love for the baptism — shall we wait for that ; with folded arms ? No, brothers, no. Let us live as if it were so now. Earth shall be blessed and heaven ours.

QUESTIONS

ADDRESSED TO

REV. T. PARKER,

AND

HIS FRIENDS.

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BOSTON :  
HALLIBURTON & DUDLEY,  
No. 12 STATE STREET.  
1845.





## QUESTIONS.

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[ON many points referred to in the following questions the author sincerely wishes to be informed. As to others, his mind, as will appear, is for the present decided. The questions are put by an humble individual who believes that the intelligence of this community does not need or bear to be dictated to; that it will not long be misled by any sophistry, or satisfied with a cold and cheerless absence of faith; that if only put upon the path of a candid and thorough and enlightened inquiry, it will lay transient and pretending delusions aside, and embrace and hold fast the truth. They are put by one who also believes Jesus Christ—the Christ of the New Testament—to be “the Son of God with power,” of infallible authority, of a perfect life, a sufficient Savior, “the image of the invisible God.”]

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### PART I. MR. PARKER'S THEOLOGICAL POSITION AND DOCTRINES.

Will the advocates of the largest liberty and the largest liberality indulge us for a little while in the exercise of that freedom which they claim, provided we will speak in a kindly temper, and with a reverence for truth?

Ought not the faith of the Christian world to rest on some intelligible basis, on the foundation of sound doctrine?

Would the Christian religion have endured and planted itself indestructibly, as it has, in the heart of human kind, if Jesus Christ had only said, 'Love God, love man,' and illustrated those two precepts by a conscientious deportment?

Have not many other teachers taught as much as this, and lived purely too, and yet left hardly a record of their names in the history of the world?

Would the mere difference, *in this sole respect*, for instance, between Jesus and Socrates, account at all for the unspeakable difference between the influence of the one on "the ages," and the influence of the other?

Looking now simply to the *results* of Christ's mission, is it not the only natural and rational inference, that he must have been endowed with a power different in *kind* from that of any natural being who has appeared on earth?

Or taking the broad general scope of the New Testament itself, does not that book unquestionably intend to teach that to be a Christian requires the recognition of Christ as a peculiar, extraordinary, supernatural, unexampled being?

Is there not something in the reverence of his disciples and his apostles for him, which a regard for superior virtue cannot fully,—can hardly begin to,—explain?

If the New Testament reveals anything, does it not reveal Christ as something more than an exemplary man, who lived, denied himself, was slain, buried, and never seen again?

Is it not rather an *exercise of reason* than a *rejection* of it, to ascribe an effect to an adequate cause ?

If we descend to particular passages, do they not convey the same truth, as explicitly, over and over again, as the general tone of the book declares it ?

Can the supernatural in the New Testament be all struck out, without destroying the integrity of the volume, and impairing fatally in the human mind, all veneration for it ? for such a patched-up, deceptive, and treacherous guide ?

Shall a book full of such offences and blunders, claim confidence as a teacher on the highest and infinitely the most important of all subjects ?

Suppose you could take out and throw away the *accounts* of miraculous events, what will you do with the frequent allusions to those events by Christ himself, and his assertions that he wrought them, and his repeated appeals to them as proofs of his divine mission ?

Will some one show us how it is within the broadest limits of possibility to separate between a belief in full of Mr. Parker's doctrines baldly stated, and the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth pretended to do what he could not do ? and the consequent conviction that, as he based his authority on a falsehood, he was a most arrant and gross impostor ?

If we may strike out of the Gospel what Mr. Parker strikes out, what may we not strike out ?

Might not a Spartan strike out whatever forbids stealing ?

If you talk about *intuition of truth*, where would the 'intuition of truth' have been in this nineteenth century,

if the Christian miracles had not sustained the world from plunging into deeper and deeper darkness?

Is that man entitled, *in his own eyes*, to the name of a Christian who rejects prophecy, who denies that a miracle is or ever was possible, and who holds the resurrection of our Lord to be only a pleasant legend? who thinks the holy Jesus was not sinless, not without his weaknesses, not free from error?

Is not the question whether Christ was *competent* to teach absolute and unimpeachable truth, to teach it infallibly, a much deeper cause of division than any about the meaning, the interpretation of his words? Does not he who maintains the negative of the former question, by that act remove himself from the platform of Christian faith?

Were a Mahometan to treat the Koran as Mr. Parker treats the Gospels, would he be any longer recognized as a Mahometan?

Would a Swedenborgian who should treat Swedenborg as Mr. Parker treats Jesus Christ, continue to be received as a good Swedenborgian?

Why cling so tenaciously to a name out of which you take the peculiar and distinctive meaning?

Do you expect sane men to accept your statement when you declare that you replace as much veneration for Christ's character as you take away? Is it in the nature of things that you can honor a being as highly by believing him to be imperfect, as by believing him to be perfect? by holding that he did and thought wrong sometimes, as by holding that he was never mistaken, was always without sin?



Does Mr. Parker mean to convey the idea, as he seems to quite clearly in one of his printed discourses, that all Christ did to prove his Messiahship was to announce himself the first and chief of all great, self-made men, and live a life pretty nearly perfect? and does he sincerely mean, as he certainly there implies, that it is only necessary for another man to live a little *more nearly* perfect, and proclaim himself superior to Jesus, in order to be so? And would he convey the impression that he is making the experiment?

If Mr. Parker is so much afraid of "limiting the omnipotence of God," as he expresses it, as to feel obliged to say that God may have other and greater messengers than Jesus in store in the future, why is he not equally scrupulous lest he "limit the omnipotence of God" in reference to the possibility of miracles?

Is it forgotten, when Mr. Parker's excellent private life is adduced to prove the truth of his views, that there are multitudes of righteous men and women, in the proportion of a thousand to one, living lives of equal integrity and purity and self-sacrifice every-way, to say the least? If the rule holds, then must not these—all differing as they do—hold correct views also? Is there not an inconsistency here? And, in fine—may not a man's doctrines be dangerous and pernicious, and yet his daily conduct from various causes be unblameable?

If it must come to a personal test, is it, in point of fact, true that Mr. Parker's whole career, public as well as private, *is so completely* free from all signs of earthly infirmity, as to distinguish it from that of other good and earnest men? Will he claim it himself? And must he not admit that he owes to

Christian institutions and doctrines, some of which he now scouts at, a large measure of his knowledge and virtue ?

Educate a few successive generations in Mr. Parker's system, imbue and indoctrinate them with it, and what would be the influence of Christianity and the aspect of the world, a century hence ?

Because Mr. Parker and a few others can lead respectable lives without a warm, full spirit of ready faith, does it follow that mankind in general had better abandon the belief of ages, and try the same fearful chance ?

Does not a dark mistrust, a momentary reproach, sometimes rise up in the hearts of these men at the effect they may be working on many misdirected minds ?

Is that tone of bitterness, scornful sarcasm, and undignified levity, in which Mr. Parker allows himself so much while treating the most solemn and hallowed subjects, perfectly Christian ?

Does he not know that religious convictions and religious sensibilities can never be wantonly wounded by any but irreverent lips ?

Can one or ten or twenty unexceptionable discourses redeem an utterly unscriptural theology ? May there not be mischief and error enough in a very few passages to corrupt and make poisonous a whole volume ?

Without charging infidelity upon Mr. Parker personally, may it not be asked if the rankest disbeliever might not be exceedingly philanthropic, benevolent, just and orderly ?

Is it not possible that Mr. Parker is deceived respecting the real character of a large portion of those who seek to

listen to his instructions? With a considerable number of devout and well-meaning individuals, is he sure there are not joined others that love not holiness nor prayer, but delight in attacks on whatever is sacred?

Does Mr. Parker seriously suppose that his opinions will share any other fate than that which has attended hundreds of like aspiring attempts,—or like delusions of one-sided students,—to flourish showily a little while, and then miserably perish?

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## PART II. MR. PARKER'S POSITION IN RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

For what reason does Mr. Parker retain his connexion with the Christian Church, while he declares, in many forms of expression, that it is a worn-out, an essentially corrupt, and a deceptive institution? Why does he remain in those "rotten walls"?

With his views of ministerial ordination, why does he continue to hold an office in which ordination placed him? Does he find, after all, that there is some advantage in these antiquated and foolish establishments?

While he denounces the Christian pulpit as hypocritical and time-serving and cowardly, why does he continue to stand in that pulpit?

Would it not be more fair and manly to cut loose from such an outrageous imposition at once, and entirely?

If he replies that it is he, above all others, who fulfils the true and right purposes of the Church, and that he alone is the genuine and honest minister, will he expect the world to stand much in admiration of his modesty?

Is not the language "I alone am a noble, brave and genuine apostle; all the other servants of God, the great mass of them, at least, devoted as they seem, are but liars and trimmers and false-hearted cowards,"—is not this sort of speech liable to excite the suspicion that it is not prompted by the profoundest humility? Is it more than natural to ascribe it to a very different posture of mind? Has not sophistry gained an undue and dangerous ascendancy over an individual that will allow himself by *his words or his actions* to imply such a self-estimation? Does it not, in fact, amount to an ambitiousness of pretension compared with which the arrogance of Apostolic Succession were meekness itself?

If he urges that he has a perfect right to his pulpit and to his connexion with this craven and disgraced brotherhood, may we ask if he takes the most high-minded course in asserting and maintaining that right? Why not be above reproach, and wash his hands clean of the foul contamination of such associates? Why not avoid even the appearance of evil?

Nay, if his views of Christian institutions are correct and sincerely held, ought he not to give us an example of utter and complete emancipation from them? offer us the instance of a man escaped from the bondage of these enslaving superstitions, and shew us how gloriously he can get along without so much vain and silly machinery?



Then, is there not an impression burdening and galling some minds, that Mr. Parker has been maltreated, abused, persecuted, by the religious denomination that he has hitherto had a nominal connexion with? Will some one state definitely in what respect he has been maltreated, or abused, or persecuted? Has not he received as many encouragements as most preachers? Who has abridged his liberties, or infringed on his rights, or questioned his integrity, or doubted his sincerity, or slandered his name?

If ministers have declined exchanging pulpits with him, is that a proof that they have withheld from him their cordial good-will, their respect for him as an upright fellow-man, and all Christian courtesy?

May they not be obliged by the most solemn and imperative convictions of duty, and their sober regard for the spiritual edification of the people committed to their charge, to decline these exchanges? And may it not cost some of them a severe struggle, and a hard and unwelcome sacrifice, to do so?

Has nobody a conscience but Mr. Parker? Is it worth while to whine, and cry out "persecution," and seek to get up the glorification of martyrdom, because a class of professional men are endeavoring to discharge the duties of their office according to their sense of responsibility, and the demands of their faith and their Master?

Has there been any bitterness, impatience, or malice exhibited towards Mr. Parker? Has any person formed and publicly pronounced a hasty judgment?

If the matter were thoroughly investigated and impartially weighed, might it not be discovered that the ministers with whom Mr. Parker has been associated, have

endured quite as much suffering as they have inflicted ?

Has not the course Mr. Parker has persisted in been such as must occasion them, if they are sincere in their belief, much grief, inconvenience, mortification, embarrassment and reproach ? Have they thrust themselves before the public with their grievances, and made loud denunciatory complaints and charges ? or have they, as a body, kept their trouble among themselves, and borne their sorrow in patient silence, rather than depart from the broadest platform of fellowship, on which they have stood together ? If the latter is true, which party may claim the more dignity and magnanimity ? Ought we not, at least, as an impartial community, when the question of injurious treatment is raised, to look, without bias, on both sides of it ?

Are there not certain reports in circulation in this community, disparaging and censuring Mr. Parker's ministerial associates, which reports profess to have proceeded originally from Mr. Parker's own lips ?

When these reports are carried to Mr. Parker by those who feel wronged by them, does he, or does he not disavow that he was the author of them, and pronounce them unfounded ? If he *does*, should they not be openly contradicted, and never be repeated by Mr. Parker's friends ?

Has Mr. Parker been in the habit of attending the meetings of the Association of which he has been a member, and so used the ordinary and natural means of perpetuating a good understanding with them, in their professional capacity ?

Has he not, in one instance, been expressly invited by the Association, to a free, cordial conference on the subject of his opinions ?

Did he not accept the invitation, and profess himself entirely satisfied with the frankness and friendliness of spirit, in which the interview was conducted ?

Then, turning to the subject of exchanges, can Mr. Parker or his friends *desire* that exchanges between him and these same clergymen should become general ?

What profit can possibly result from presenting two systems of religious belief, so utterly hostile and irreconcilable, from the same pulpit ?

If churches are built for the single and declared purpose of preaching Christ, as the *infallible* Teacher, the *perfect* Guide, the messenger of a divine and supernatural revelation, and a sufficient Savior,—how *can* they be appropriately opened to any person holding Mr. Parker's published views ?

Is the minister faithful to his trust, who brings before his own people, and puts in his own place, a teacher of opinions which he conscientiously believes to be radically false, subversive of a true faith and a steadfast piety ?

Shall a Christian preacher encourage, and afford all facilities for the diffusion of, views which he cannot, by any possible logic, separate from Deism ?

Shall he ask his neighbor to come and do all he can to destroy the work of his own hands, and to defeat the objects of his own toils and prayers ? to weaken men's reverence for the Holy Scriptures ? to prove that Jesus Christ was either egregiously mistaken, or else a gross impostor ? that prophecy is all sheer delusion, and the resurrection a lie ?

Shall the Christian preacher be imposed upon by the shallow plea that he must commit all this folly and mis-

chief, for the sake of charity and liberality, and to escape the charge of inconsistency?

May not the Calvinists have been illiberal possibly in excluding Unitarians from their pulpits, and yet the Unitarians be liberal in excluding Mr. Parker?

Can there be a greater, more essential, more radical theological difference respecting Christianity, than that which obtains between Mr. Parker, and any believer in Christ as the faultless and the infallible and the miraculously endowed Son of God, risen from the dead?

But then, is it quite certain that all the Calvinists have been illiberal in this regard,—in declining exchanges with Unitarians?

If some have acted from narrow and sectarian prejudices, may not others among them have acted from the soundest convictions? and acted wisely?

Would it not be a mistake to establish the general custom of exchanging, between the promulgators of schemes so unlike? Would there be anything gained by it after all? Neither preacher hearing the other's arguments or representations, (being absent on the exchange,) and each if true to his duty preaching the doctrines he holds, must not the inevitable result be to turn the sacred altar into an arena of the most unprofitable sort of controversy, throwing the people into a deplorable agitation and perplexity, and preventing all spiritual edification, which is the grand purpose of the ministry?

Is it not the more sensible course to have doctrines, *generally similar*, on the most vital of all topics, presented from the same place, that men may understand what to depend upon? Going where they please, by all means ought they not still to find and hear what they were seek-



ing? Is not the world wide enough to grant space for all sects, without compelling them to cross each other's paths?

Would such interchanges really promote Christian love, or really promote dissension and confusion?

Is a clergyman faithful to his ordination vows who causes things to be preached to his society which his society were very far from engaging and employing him to preach? Would not that be a virtual breach of contract?

Have not the owners of a meeting-house an entire right to determine who shall preach in it?

If the minister is dissatisfied with his bargain and their wishes, is it not the only manly course for him, to obey his conscience and quietly resign and withdraw, leaving the society to exercise their rights in their own way?

Should it be said that there is nothing to fear from any man's tongue, that truth will conquer, and error must fail and die, and that it is best to speak and hear everything? Then, does this mean that we should *assist* error, help it in the fight, lead it on, put weapons into its hands, retire and give it our own position, and so prolong the battle and the battle's misery? Is this our duty? Have we grown so strong and confident, that we may do all this? What, in the name of all that is loyal, should we be, then, but traitors and disguised *enemies* of the truth?

Because Christianity bids mankind,—clergymen included,—love *all* their fellow-men, must those clergymen go and exchange with Mormons, Mahometans, Millerites, Tartars, idiots, Jews, Hindoos, Pantheists or Deists? Is not common sense applicable to the clerical profes-

sion, as well as others? Are not exchanges to be regulated by wisdom, discretion and conscience? Does a minister owe nothing to the souls of his people, and the Cause of his Master, but every thing to a crotchet in his own excited or one-sided brain?

Is it not an absurd fallacy to suppose that the only or the decisive way of proving a minister's good-will and brotherly love, and generous sympathies, is to bring him to an exchange of pulpits with any individual on earth, especially with one whose influence and doctrine on the most sacred fundamental themes are directly opposite to his own? Would not wisdom and duty dictate to each of two such parties to abide by its own sphere, adhere to its own cause, oppress not the other, serve its own master, and reap its own harvest?

8

AN

ANSWER

TO

“QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO REV. T. PARKER AND  
HIS FRIENDS.”

BY

“A FRIEND INDEED.”

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BOSTON:  
ANDREWS, PRENTISS & STUDLEY,

No. 11 Devonshire Street.

1845.

## P R E F A C E .

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THE Author of the following Tract has delayed its publication, in the expectation that some one else would reply to the questions here subjected to review. In the opinion of many, these questions, or at least a great proportion of them, have seemed hardly to require any extended notice, and yet it may well be considered whether silence in such a case would not be construed into a concession of our opponent's argument.

“On many points,” says the author of the questions in his preface, “on many points referred to in the following questions the author sincerely wishes to be informed.”—Here, then, is another reason for the reply which is now offered, and though the answers here presented may not satisfy the captious inquirer, they may be sufficient to show that all minds do not think alike on these important subjects, but may conscientiously differ, while in fundamentals they agree — as do, in this case, the writers both of the questions and answers, in holding Jesus Christ to be “the Son of God with power, of infallible authority, of a perfect life, a sufficient Saviour, the image of the invisible God.”



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

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### PART I.—MR. PARKER'S THEOLOGICAL POSITION AND DOCTRINES.

"Will the advocates of the largest liberty and the largest liberality indulge us for a little while in the exercise of that freedom which they claim, provided we will speak in a kindly temper, and with a reverence for truth?"

ANS. — We can do no less, for we ask no less than that the cause of *truth* and *toleration* may "have free course and be glorified."

"Ought not the faith of the Christian world to rest on some intelligible basis, on the foundation of sound doctrine?"

ANS. — Certainly ; — on the doctrine of DUTY — duty to God and humanity — and on that "CHARITY" which is "the bond of perfectness :"— "LOVE TO GOD, and LOVE TO MAN." "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

"Would the Christian religion have endured and planted itself indestructibly, as it has, in the heart of human kind, if Jesus Christ had only said, 'Love God, love man,' and illustrated those two precepts by a conscientious deportment?"

ANS. — For "*conscientious*" here read *corresponding*, and we have no hesitation in saying YES ; because these two principles of PIETY and PHILANTHROPY, carried out as they were in the life of Jesus, are sufficient to immortalize any system to which they are the motives. In the opinion of some the power of Jesus, and consequently the power of his religion, lay in the perfect equilibrium of these two principles in his nature — PIETY and PHILANTHROPY. The complete balance of his virtues and disinterestedness con-

stitutes, in the opinion of some, the secret of his success, under God, and hence, also, as they think, the power, commonly ascribed to him, of working miracles.

“Have not many other teachers taught as much as this, and lived purely too, and yet left hardly a record of their names in the history of the world?”

ANS. — No. Who are they and where are they? and why reduce the comparison thus? Will our querist contend that any other teachers have lived *as purely* as Jesus? Will he undertake to show this? Until he does so his argument, in this connection, obviously has no force. The superior consistency of Jesus makes all the difference in the world.

“Would the mere difference, *in this sole respect*, for instance, between Jesus and Socrates, account at all for the unspeakable difference between the influence of the one on ‘the ages,’ and the influence of the other?”

ANS. — Possibly it might, for we have to consider that, after all, whatever may be the difference between a UNIVERSAL PHILANTHROPY and a *mere sentiment of Patriotism*, even this is but a faint measure of the difference between Jesus Christ and Socrates. The philanthropy of Jesus Christ was immortal, expansive, and broad enough to cover “the ages”—that of Socrates covered only the interests of Athens. Socrates, it might be said, loved and served the Athenians only. His “love of man” was limited to them. Jesus, on the other hand, was a PHILANTHROPIST in the broadest and fullest possible sense. He loved and served THE WORLD. The virtues of Socrates were, after all, only the virtues of a generous Athenian moralist. Those of Jesus were the apotheosis of all the virtues possible to human nature. Hence the greater power of Jesus over the universal heart of humanity.

“Looking now simply to the *results* of Christ’s mission, is it not the only natural and rational inference, that he must have been endowed with a power different in *kind* from that of any natural being who has appeared on earth?”

ANS. — Perhaps so; and, to the writer of this, it would so seem; and yet it is worthy of consideration whether to us short-sighted beings, an extreme difference in *degree* of power may not often seem a difference in *kind*. Who shall predicate as to the *results* which might follow again a development of moral power and self-denial similar to that of Jesus Christ? Who has ever tried the experiment? and who knows what the powers of humanity may effect if projected again as they were in Jesus Christ?

“Or taking the broad general scope of the New Testament itself, does not that book unquestionably intend to teach that to be a Christian requires the recognition of Christ as a peculiar, extraordinary, supernatural, unexampled being?”

ANS. — Yes. Taking the New Testament, by the *letter*, as we find it, we might suppose that such was its purpose; but then we must allow something for the fact, in the first place, that the Jewish expectations of the Messiah have strongly tinged the New Testament representations of him; secondly, that the Apostles wrote more or less under the influence of this conception, as well as the awful impression of his self-sacrifice; and, thirdly, that the present version of the Scriptures emanated from *Trinitarian* expositors, whose interest would be to exalt, even to a superstitious extent, the supernatural claims of the Saviour.

“Is there not something in the reverence of his disciples and his apostles for him, which a regard for superior virtue cannot fully, — can hardly begin to, — explain?”

ANS. — No. And what does the reverence of his disciples amount to, when we are told that one of them *denied* him, twice and again; another *betrayed* him, and, in the last crisis, “*they all forsook him and fled*”? Who knows what reverential effect might be produced on us of the present day, could we but see before us the same impersonation of virtues? Surely if the reverence of his disciples had been founded only or chiefly on the idea of his supernatural claims, it would have been less easily affected, and less capricious.

“If the New Testament reveals anything, does it not reveal Christ as something more than an exemplary man, who lived, denied himself, was slain, buried, and never seen again?”

ANS. — As above — that the Jewish notions of the Messiah have strongly tinged the New Testament representations of Christ. And besides, the New Testament, *as it is* in our present version, can hardly be considered the Gospel *as it was*.

“Is it not rather an *exercise of reason* than a *rejection* of it, to ascribe an effect to an adequate cause?”

ANS. — Certainly; and therefore Mr. Parker, in the exercise of *his* reason, deems that he assigns quite as adequate a cause as his opponents, for the effects referred to; and who shall judge between them?

“If we descend to particular passages, do they not convey the same truth,

as explicitly, over and over again, as the general tone of the book declares it? ”

ANS. — Yes. No doubt the Scriptures are consistent : but, the question still is, and ever has been — what *is* the truth so conveyed or intended ?

“ Can the supernatural in the New Testament be all struck out, without destroying the integrity of the volume, and impairing, fatally, in the human mind, all veneration for it ? for such a patched-up, deceptive, and treacherous guide ? ”

ANS. — Perhaps not. But then the question still recurs, what *constitutes* the supernatural ? What *is* supernatural ? What *seems* so to one is *not* so to another. To the savage there are miracles in a cannonade or an eclipse. Not so to a Franklin.

“ Shall a book, full of such offences and blunders, claim confidence as a teacher on the highest and infinitely the most important of all subjects ? ”

ANS. — Yes. Because the blunders are not God’s. *They* belong to the historians and translators, and cannot kill or neutralize the *truth of God*, which is in the record still. There is yet *absolute truth* enough there to save the book and counterbalance the errors.

“ Suppose you could take out and throw away the *accounts* of miraculous events, what will you do with the frequent allusions to those events by Christ himself, and his assertions that he wrought them, and his repeated appeals to them as proofs of his divine mission ? ”

ANS. — Ask his disciples whether they *heard* him right in these particulars ; for, if it be possible that they erred in *other* accounts of these miracles, they may also have erred in *their* account of what he said.

“ Will some one show us how it is within the broadest limits of possibility to separate between a belief in full of Mr. Parker’s doctrines baldly stated, and the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth pretended to do what he could not do ? and the consequent conviction that, as he based his authority on a falsehood, he was a most arrant and gross impostor ? ”

ANS. — Mr. Parker does not say or imply that Jesus was an impostor. He only questions whether, in all particulars, the evangelists have rightly represented him, or the facts concerning him, and whether we have rightly interpreted those facts and statements.

“ If we may strike out of the Gospel what Mr. Parker strikes out, what may we not strike out ? ”

ANS. — We may not strike out anything which commends itself to our reason or common sense, or the light within us ; and we *may*, and in fact *do*, all of us, strike out all which does *not* so com-



mend itself. The fact is, nothing is, *for us*, truly *in* the record, till, with our understanding or reason, we *see* it, apprehend, or assent thereunto. This is plain.

“Might not a Spartan strike out whatever forbids stealing?”

ANS. — Certainly. If stealing were a matter of *conscience* with the Spartan, and if, in the light of his reason, he could see it right to steal, he unquestionably *would* do so. By the act of stealing he *does* virtually, and in fact, strike out of the record the command, which says, “Thou shalt not steal.” And so our inquisitive friend who asks these questions, in so far as he is denying Mr. Parker the Christian name, is, by that act, striking out of the record, or nullifying the rule of charity, which says, “judge no man.”

“If you talk about *intuition of truth*, where would the ‘intuition of truth’ have been in this nineteenth century, if the Christian miracles had not sustained the world from plunging into deeper and deeper darkness?”

ANS. — Where it always has been, — in the hand of God, and in the soul and constitution of man.

“Is that man entitled, *in his own eyes*, to the name of a Christian, who rejects prophecy, who denies that a miracle is or ever was possible, and who holds the resurrection of our Lord to be only a pleasant legend? Who thinks the holy Jesus was not sinless, not without his weaknesses, not free from error?”

ANS. — “*Petito principii*”! “What is it to be a Christian”? The question here goes on the supposition, or assumption, that a belief in prophecy, the miracles, the resurrection, &c., constitutes a man’s claims to be called a Christian, and that without this he is none. Whereas we maintain that a man may believe all these things and yet be no Christian at all, in any right sense. He, and he only, is a Christian, who lives, according to his ability, **THE LIFE OF CHRIST.**

“Is not the question, whether Christ was *competent* to teach absolute and unimpeachable truth, to teach it infallibly, a much deeper cause of division than any about the meaning, the interpretation of his words?”

ANS. — Yes. And this is the very “**SWORD OF DIVISION**” which the Saviour said he should bring.

“Does not he who maintains the negative of the former question, by that act remove himself from the platform of Christian faith?”

ANS. — Perhaps he *does* from that which is *called* the right platform, while, for all *we* know, he may be standing on a stronger and surer one.

“Were a Mahometan to treat the Koran as Mr. Parker treats the Gospels, would he be any longer recognized as a Mahometan?”

ANS. — Perhaps not by the more bigoted among the TURKS; and yet, in regard to all that is really KORANIC, or in real affinity with the prophet of Mecca, he might be the best Mahometan living, and all ready for the “seventh heaven.” The TURKS are proverbially more *honest* than the CHRISTIANS, and consequently would not reject “*an honest man!*”

“Would a Swedenborgian who should treat Swedenborg as Mr. Parker treats Jesus Christ, continue to be received as a good Swedenborgian?”

ANS. — What a Swedenborgian or Mahometan *would* do, is of far less consequence than what a Christian *should* do; and yet we may say, in answer to this, that if a Swedenborgian would not receive the *eulogist* or *copyist*, of Swedenborg, then he could be no true member of the “New Jerusalem Church.” It would be a strange sort of Swedenborgianism that would reject any one “who should treat Swedenborg as Mr. Parker treats Jesus Christ,” when he calls him, as he often does, “the chiefest incarnation of God,” “the King of truth,” &c.

“Why cling so tenaciously to a name out of which you take the peculiar and distinctive meaning?”

ANS. — Ay! Sure enough! You may well ask that! Why call ourselves “LIBERAL CHRISTIANS,” while we belie the title?

“Do you expect sane men to accept your statement when you declare that you replace as much veneration for Christ’s character as you take away?”

ANS. — Yes: — And we may safely appeal to “sane men” for a judgment in regard to Mr. Parker’s representations of Christ.

“Is it in the nature of things that you can honor a being as highly by believing him to be imperfect, as by believing him to be perfect? by holding that he did and thought wrong, sometimes, as by holding that he was never mistaken, was always without sin?”

ANS. — Yes. To any being, *less than God*, we shall undoubtedly accord all the more honor in proportion as we know he is fallible, or human, and yet remains true and unfailing. If that being claim human relations we shall reverence him all the more in proportion as we know he is *liable* to fall, or *capable* of defection, and yet *never has fallen*.

“Does Mr. Parker mean to convey the idea, as he seems to quite clearly in one of his printed discourses, that all Christ did to prove his Messiahship was to announce himself the first and chief of all great, self-made men, and

live a life pretty nearly perfect? And does he sincerely mean, as he certainly there implies, that it is only necessary for another man to live a little *more nearly* perfect, and proclaim himself superior to Jesus, in order to be so? And would he convey the impression that he is making the experiment?"

Ans. — We do not believe that even Jesus himself would very much condemn the man who *should* make the experiment of being better, if possible, than he was. He himself assigned a standard beyond himself. "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, — that is God." "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." So that this "experiment" of even *Godlike* perfections, through Christ, would not be so very heinous, much as our querist aims to sharpen this insinuation against Mr. Parker. We sincerely hope he *is* making the experiment, and may God bless him *if* he is, and would to heaven there were *more* such experimentalists; and it is because there are *not* more, that the church and the world are now so selfish and "dead in their trespasses." It was precisely this "experiment" of being perfect that our Saviour would have all of us try, and, in full answer to the question here put, I suppose there is no doubt that if any one *does* live "a little *more nearly* perfect" than Jesus, then he will be superior to him. Did Jesus lie, when he said, "greater works than these shall ye do?"

"If Mr. Parker is so much afraid of 'limiting the omnipotence of God,' as he expresses it, as to feel obliged to say that God may have other and greater messengers than Jesus in store in the future, why is he not equally scrupulous lest he 'limit the omnipotence of God' in reference to the possibility of miracles?"

Ans. — Assuming a miracle to be, as commonly defined, "a deviation from the laws of nature," Mr. Parker would contend (if we rightly understand him,) that no such deviation is at all probable, because the "laws of God," as established in nature and providence, are, and must be, unchangeable; unless we reject the attribute commonly ascribed to God, of unchangeableness. A miracle in reference to God himself, is, of course, impossible. In reference to *ourselves*, what *seems* a miracle, or, in other words, "a deviation from nature's laws," may *seem* so only in consequence of our limited apprehensions of what "the laws of nature" *really are*. There may possibly be "more things in heaven and earth than are yet dreamt of in our philosophy." "The miracles of Christ," so called, may be only, according to Mr. Parker, the natural results of that higher principle of a holy life which was in him, his greater

fidelity to those spiritual laws which were founded in his nature and in all our natures. So that, in fact, coming to the question here proposed by our opponent, it would seem that Mr. Parker really *exalts* the power of God by his theory; for in supposing it *possible* that God may yet send other messengers greater than Jesus, (or that he has *power* so to do,) he of course implies that such messengers may have power to work even *greater* miracles than Jesus did. Indeed, Jesus himself seems to have promised something like this distinction, even to those of his followers, then living, by the words already quoted, "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to the Father."

"Is it forgotten, when Mr. Parker's excellent private life is adduced to prove the truth of his views, that there are multitudes of righteous men and women, in the proportion of a thousand to one, living lives of equal integrity and purity and self-sacrifice, every-way, to say the least?"

Ans. — Oh, no! not at all. Don't be jealous, friend. We detract nothing from any such persons, when we commend Mr. Parker. Let us bless God that there are so many good people.

"If the rule holds, then must not these — all differing as they do — hold correct views also?"

Ans. — Undoubtedly, so far as relates to the rules and doctrines of *practical duty*, which cover all others. They may differ in the non-essentials of speculative faith, and yet agree in all that really appertains to the religious life; and their agreement in this only shows how powerfully the doctrine of "absolute religion," as advocated by Mr. Parker, will underrun and supersede all disputed articles of faith, just as the strong undercurrent of a river goes clearly onward, and forms the main tide, while chips, eddies, and the wrecks of man's folly, are floating around on the surface.

"Is there not an inconsistency here? And, in fine, may not a man's doctrines be dangerous, and pernicious, and yet his daily conduct, from various causes, be unblameable?"

Ans. — Assuming the above predicate that the doctrines of practical duty, and a godly life, are *the essential* doctrines, it can hardly be said that any man is absolutely in error, whose life and practice is based upon those doctrines; for "as a man thinketh, in his heart, so is he." There is as much Christianity, as rough point, in those lines of Pope, —

"WORTH makes the man, the want of it the fellow:  
The rest is naught but leather and prunella."



So also in these, —

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;  
His can't be wrong, whose *life* is in the right.”

“If it must come to a personal test, is it, in point of fact, true, that Mr. Parker's whole career, public as well as private, *is so completely* free from all signs of earthly infirmity, as to distinguish it from that of other good and earnest men? Will he claim it himself?”

Ans. — He claims nothing for himself, but *justice*. We accept this insinuation of our querist for all that it is worth, and yet, if the question is seriously raised, as to Mr. Parker's claim to such distinction as is here implied, we will cast the burden of proof for or against Mr. P. on his opponents. Come, gentlemen, which of you will “cast the first stone,” for demonstration of your superiority to Mr. Parker, as a practical Christian? The old adage is good for something here, “*They who live in glass houses,*” &c.

“And must he not admit that he owes to Christian institutions and doctrines, some of which he now scouts at, a large measure of his knowledge and virtue?”

Ans. — He allows to “Christianity, its doctrines and institutions,” all that is due in regard to the formation of his character; none more readily than he, — but that is no reason he should allow the same to what is spurious, extraneous, or superficial in Christianity, so called. He scouts at nothing, either in doctrine or institution, from which he has really derived motive or impulse in the divine life, but only at such as seem to him to wear the *mask* of a divine origin, — the vain traditions, interpolations, and sophistries of men.

“Educate a few successive generations in Mr. Parker's system, imbue and indoctrinate them with it, and what would be the influence of Christianity and the aspect of the world, a century hence?”

Ans. — Possibly a millennium! The influence of *nominal* Christianity would then, of course, be diminished. Much of what is now *called* Christianity would be superseded, as it would deserve to be, and a diviner life would take the place of inert creeds, a heartless dogmatism, and the quarrels of sects.

“Because Mr. Parker, and a few others, can lead respectable lives without a warm, full spirit of ready faith, does it follow that mankind in general had better abandon the belief of ages, and try the same fearful chance?”

ANSWERED, by another question. — Are you quite sure that Mr. Parker has *not* “a warm, full spirit of ready faith”? Is it any

the less faith because it is not *yours*? “Who art thou that judgest another,” in this particular?

“Does not a dark mistrust, a momentary reproach, sometimes rise up in the hearts of these men, at the effect they may be working on many mis-directed minds?”

ANS. — About as dark a mistrust as that of the disciples, when they saw the rising of “the Sun of Righteousness.”

“Is that tone of bitterness, scornful sarcasm, and undignified levity, in which Mr. Parker allows himself so much while treating the most solemn and hallowed subjects, perfectly Christian?”

ANSWERED, by another question. — Was it “perfectly Christian,” or not, in the Saviour, to call the formalists of his day by their right names — “hypocrites,” and “whited sepulchres,” “wolves in sheep’s clothing,” “devourers of widows’ houses,” “making clean the outside of the platter,” &c. ? Was it Christian or not in him to rebuke the length or insincerity of their prayers, and the breadth of their phylacteries? *He* was touching, then, what to the Pharisees were “hallowed subjects” — the formal requisitions of their religion.

“Does he not know that religious convictions, and religious sensibilities, can never be wantonly wounded by any but irreverent lips?”

ANS. — Were *they* less than “religious convictions” and “sensibilities,” in the Jews, which the *Saviour* wounded by *his* admonitions? And shall we say that *his* lips were “irreverent”?

“Can one, or ten, or twenty, unexceptionable discourses, redeem an utterly unscriptural theology?”

ANS. — It would seem that *to the Jews* the *Saviour’s* theology was unscriptural; and no doubt *they* thought it was enough to condemn even his “Sermon on the Mount”!

“May there not be mischief and error enough, in a very few passages, to corrupt and make poisonous a whole volume?”

ANS. — Undoubtedly, to a *bigot*, there may be. And so the over-fastidious may find poison enough to kill a dog in the midst of very excellent and nutritious fruits. Prussic acid lies in the very heart of a clingstone peach: but will our inquisitive friend abjure peaches on that account? Then we will agree to eat all the peaches he will send us this summer, and risk all the poison he abominates.

“Without charging infidelity upon Mr. Parker, personally, may it not be asked, if the rankest disbeliever might not be exceedingly philanthropic, benevolent, just, and orderly?”

ANS. — Mark the words, “*exceedingly* philanthropic,” &c. In other words, cannot a man be almost or quite a Christian, and yet no Christian at all?

“Is it not possible that Mr. Parker is deceived respecting the real character of a large portion of those who seek to listen to his instructions?”

ANS. — In other words, is Mr. Parker fool enough to suppose he is preaching to a company of saints and angels? Of course not, for if they were so, then there would be no need of his preaching at all. It would really be amusing, were it not so serious a matter, to apply this very question elsewhere, to some other preachers, who seem to think that their congregations are no less than “the glorious company of the apostles,” and to ask, in the words of our querist, “Is it not possible that Rev. Messrs. A., B. and C. are deceived respecting the real character and faith of a large portion of those who seek to listen to their instructions?” Do they really flatter themselves that every man who owns a pew in their church, and occupies it half the day on Sunday, is fast anchored in the orthodoxy of Unitarianism, and “takes for law and Gospel” everything the minister says? Do they never imagine that many of their own sheep wander away to the *heretical pasture*,\* and feel themselves better fed there? and do they think these are only the *black* sheep of their flocks? Why, my dear Mr. Inquisitive, more than half, yea, two-thirds of Mr. Parker’s hearers, (and they are over a thousand every Sunday,) come out of those very churches, and yet you pretend to insinuate somewhat against their characters. A poor compliment that to the ministrations under which they have sat for so many years in other churches! But let us hear what next you propose in the way of inquiry.

“With a considerable number of devout and well-meaning individuals, is he sure there are not joined others that love not holiness nor prayer, but delight in attacks on whatever is sacred?”

ANS. — Of course he is not sure of any such thing. He knows there are bad men as well as good come to hear him, and for that very reason, he comes, like his Master, “calling not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” No doubt many vagrants and wicked ones, such as “loved not holiness, nor prayer, but delighted in attacks on whatever is sacred”; no doubt many such gathered about the Saviour, in the force of their disgust or indifference towards

\* The Melodeon.

antiquated and heartless formalities in the Jewish Church, and their desire for something better; but was that any reflection upon, or a sufficient argument *against* the Saviour's teaching? It *saved* them, at all events, as no other teaching did. And now, whence comes it, or how happens it, that so many of those who come away from other churches to Mr. Parker, *are* thus thoughtless and scoffing when they come? If such be the fact, we may well wonder why those churches and ministrations have not produced better results.

"Does Mr. Parker seriously suppose that his opinions will share any other fate than that which has attended hundreds of like aspiring attempts, or like delusions of one-sided students, to flourish showily a little while, and then miserably perish?"

ANS. — We will knock at the Sanhedrim door for an answer to this, and let GAMALIEL speak: — "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought: but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it."

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#### PART II. — MR. PARKER'S POSITION IN RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND MINISTRY.

"For what reason does Mr. Parker retain his connexion with the Christian Church, while he declares, in many forms of expression, that it is a worn-out, an essentially corrupt, and a deceptive institution? Why does he remain in those 'rotten walls?'"

ANS. — In the hope of reconstructing or remodelling that which has been abused, and of saving the lives of those within. We have heard of gallant sea-captains, who have clung to their wrecks, crying, "never give up the ship;" and rescuing many a soul that was "ready to perish." Even so Mr. P., with no less loyalty, would remain in a burning or falling fabric, if he may rescue a single life that is thereby endangered.

"With his views of ministerial ordination, why does he continue to hold an office in which ordination placed him! Does he find, after all, that there is some advantage in these antiquated and foolish establishments?"

ANS. — Certainly. Just about as much as there is in the old steps, or ladder, that helps a man to the top of an observatory.

"While he denounces the Christian pulpit as hypocritical, and time-serving, and cowardly, why does he continue to stand in that pulpit?"

ANS. — He does *not* stand in any such as here defined. His presence, for the time being, in any pulpit, redeems it from the charge of being either "cowardly" or "timeserving" or hypocritical."



“Would it not be more fair and manly to cut loose from such an outrageous imposition at once, and entirely?”

ANS. — Oh! no doubt you want to get rid of him. But, let him alone awhile, and you will find the pulpit has undergone, ethically, by his means, some very decent repairs.

“If he replies that it is he, above all others, who fulfils the true and right purposes of the Church, and that he alone is the genuine and honest minister, will he expect the world to stand much in admiration of his modesty?”

ANS. — Perhaps not — “*if*” he so replies; and perhaps he does n’t care what “THE WORLD” thinks. But, then, it is incumbent on “*the world*,” so called, to disprove his claim, if so he urged it, by showing who among the ministers *is* more “honest and genuine,” and who of them *is* more fully discharging or exemplifying the objects of the Christian church.

“Is not the language ‘I alone am a noble, brave and genuine apostle; all the other servants of God, the great mass of them, at least, devoted as they seem, are but liars, and trimmers, and false-hearted cowards,’ — is not this sort of speech liable to excite the suspicion that it is not prompted by the profoundest humility? Is it more than natural to ascribe it to a very different posture of mind? Has not sophistry gained an undue and dangerous ascendancy over an individual that will allow himself by *his words or his actions* to imply such a self-estimation? Does it not, in fact, amount to an ambitiousness of pretension, compared with which the arrogance of Apostolic Succession were meekness itself?”

ANS. — Very sharp, forsooth, in your satire, Mr. Querist! And do you see where you hit? Shall we say that the SAVIOUR was guilty of ambitious pretension, arrogance, and self-exaltation, because *he* said, “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.” Might not these words, according to your theory, be construed into a want of humility? And will you have the goodness to show us where the language you insinuate against Mr. Parker, or anything like it, is used by him?

“If he urges that he has a perfect right to his pulpit, and to his connexion with this craven and disgraced brotherhood, may we ask if he takes the most high-minded course in asserting and maintaining that right? Why not be above reproach, and wash his hands clean of the foul contamination of such associates? Why not avoid even the appearance of evil?”

ANSWERED, by another question. Why did not Jesus leave the room where Judas, and Peter, and Thomas, were? Why mingle with such associates? Why not clear himself of their contamination?

“Nay, if his views of Christian institutions are correct, and sincerely held, ought he not to give us an example of utter and complete emancipation from them; offer us the instance of a man escaped from the bondage of these en-

slaving superstitions, and shew us how gloriously he can get along without so much vain and silly machinery?"

ANSWERED, again, by another question. Our Saviour being a Jew, did conform, in a measure, to the ceremonies of Judaism, by worshipping in the temple, observing the Sabbath, paying of taxes, &c., while, at the same time, he did not hesitate to speak against them as much "the lesser matters." Why did he so? Why did he not, to use your own words, Mr. Querist, "offer us the instance of one escaped from the bondage of these enslaving superstitions."

"Then, is there not an impression burdening and galling some minds, that Mr. Parker has been maltreated, abused, persecuted, by the religious denomination that he has hitherto had a nominal connexion with? Will some one state definitely in what respect he has been maltreated, or abused, or persecuted? Has not he received as many encouragements as most preachers? Who has abridged his liberties, or infringed on his rights, or questioned his integrity, or doubted his sincerity, or slandered his name?"

ANS. — There is more than one kind of Inquisition in the world, sir. You may maltreat a man quite as effectually by "the cold shoulder," and by a course of sectarian proscriptions, as by putting him under thumb-screws, or on the rack; and these are the offences to which Mr. Parker has been subject. Ask you, then, "who has abridged his liberties, or infringed on his rights, or questioned his integrity, or doubted his sincerity, or slandered his name?" I answer, it is done, all along, by implication, in this series of your questions. It is done by the obvious difficulties which are thrown in the way of his preaching. It is done by the base insinuations that he is not as good as he seems; by the frequently expressed or implied charges of infidelity that are brought against him, &c. &c.

"If ministers have declined exchanging pulpits with him, is that a proof that they have withheld from him their cordial good-will, their respect for him as an upright fellow-man, and all Christian courtesy?"

ANS. — Very "cordial good-will," truly! and very like "Christian courtesy" to call a man an infidel, when he claims to be a Christian; and what sort of "good-will," or "courtesy," is that, which, in effect, *denies* to a man the Christian name, by denying his right to occupy a Christian pulpit; saying to him, in substance, "Stand aside, for we are holier than thou!" "We wish you well, sir, but we will have nothing to do with you." Such Christianity is very much like that which calls the negro "our brother," while it refuses to ride in the same coach with him.

"May they not be obliged by the most solemn and imperative convictions of duty, and their sober regard for the spiritual edification of the people com-

mitted to their charge, to decline these exchanges? And may it not cost some of them a severe struggle, and a hard and unwelcome sacrifice to do so?"

ANS. — Then, if such *be* the struggle in their minds, and such their consciousness of sacrifice in the case, it would seem they are in some way doing violence to their conscience by the constraint of other people's prejudice. We doubt if this is right.

"Has nobody a conscience but Mr. Parker? Is it worth while to whine, and cry out "persecution," and seek to get up the glorification of martyrdom, because a class of professional men are endeavoring to discharge the duties of their office according to their sense of responsibility, and the demands of their faith and their Master?"

ANSWERED, by another question. Are not those ministers, who *do* exchange with Mr. Parker, equally well discharging their duties, "according to *their* sense of responsibility, and the demands of their faith and their master?" If so, "*is it worth while for our querist, or any others, to whine, and cry out, "heresy?"*"

"Has there been any bitterness, impatience, or malice exhibited towards Mr. Parker? Has any person formed and publicly pronounced a hasty judgment?"

ANS. — Yes. It was exhibited in the passionate assertion of one who said "he would rather have a *libertine* sit at his table, with his children, than a man holding such views as Mr. Parker;" and by another, who wished Mr. Parker were assassinated! ("Horrible dictum"!!) Expressions like these, we fear, are but too common among those who entertain a fanatical opposition in this case.

"If the matter were thoroughly investigated and impartially weighed, might it not be discovered that the ministers with whom Mr. Parker has been associated, have endured quite as much suffering as they have inflicted?"

ANS. — Undoubtedly they have suffered *more*; and the suffering was probably as much deserved as it was self-inflicted. It is a law of God's providence that the *workers* of wrong shall suffer more than the *martyrs* of it, the *oppressor* more than the *slave*, — the *inquisitor* more than the *victim* of inquisition.

"Has not the course Mr. Parker has persisted in, been such as must occasion them, if they are sincere in their belief, much grief, inconvenience, mortification, embarrassment and reproach?"

ANS. — Very likely. But whose fault is that? Put the same question by inversion and perhaps Mr. Parker may come in for a share of this commiseration.

"Have they thrust themselves before the public with their grievances, and made loud denunciatory complaints and charges?"

ANS. — Of course not, for that would have been to make themselves ridiculous by publishing their own shame.

“Or have they, as a body, kept their trouble among themselves, and borne their sorrow in patient silence, rather than depart from the broadest platform of fellowship, on which they have stood together? If the latter is true, which party may claim the more dignity and magnanimity? Ought we not, at least, as an impartial community, when the question of injurious treatment is raised, to look, without bias, on both sides of it?”

ANS. — Certainly: — and probe well the *causes* of silence and reserve in either case.

“Are there not certain reports in circulation in this community, disparaging and censuring Mr. Parker’s ministerial associates, which reports profess to have proceeded originally from Mr. Parker’s own lips?”

ANS. — This question also might be reversed. And supposing it be so, it would only prove the truth of Shakespeare’s aphorism, applicable alike to Mr. Parker and his so called “associates.”

“Back wounding calumny  
The whitest virtue strikes.”

“When these reports are carried to Mr. Parker by those who feel wronged by them, does he, or does he not disavow that he was the author of them, and pronounce them unfounded? If he *does*, should they not be openly contradicted, and never be repeated by Mr. Parker’s friends?”

ANS. — Verily, Mr. Parker and his friends would have enough to do if they undertake to “fend and prove” in regard to all that is said in disparagement of the clergy now-a-days. It is quite as much as the civil court could do to attend to or adjudicate those matters.

“Has Mr. Parker been in the habit of attending the meetings of the Association of which he has been a member, and so used the ordinary and natural means of perpetuating a good understanding with them, in their professional capacity?”

ANSWERED, by another question. Has he ever received a sufficiently cordial welcome to induce his very frequent attendance?

“Has he not, in one instance, been expressly invited by the Association, to a free, cordial conference on the subject of his opinions?”

ANS. — He has: but it was very much as Luther was summoned to the diet of Augsburg and Leipsic; — and the conference had much the same result; a failure. They did not get him to say even “Revoco!”

“Did he not accept the invitation, and profess himself entirely satisfied with the frankness and friendliness of spirit, in which the interview was conducted?”

ANS. — Yes. But he soon left the room with tearful emotions.



“Hinc illæ lachrymæ.” Much reason had he to mourn, as he thought, over the want of consistency in some of his brethren.

“Then, turning to the subject of exchanges, can Mr. Parker or his friends *desire* that exchanges between him and these same clergymen should become general?”

ANS. — Yes. Why not? For truth and toleration’s sake, why not?

“What profit can possibly result from presenting two systems of religious belief, so utterly hostile and irreconcilable, from the same pulpit?”

ANSWERED, by another question. Why does God allow two such opposite and irreconcilable elements as virtue and vice to swing in the same scale or to coexist and be presented in the same providence for our discipline? The reply is plain — that it is for our discipline, to weigh both well, and strike the balance.

“If churches are built for the single and declared purpose of preaching Christ, as the *infallible* Teacher, the *perfect* Guide, the messenger of a divine and supernatural revelation, and a sufficient Saviour, — how *can* they be appropriately opened to any person holding Mr. Parker’s views?”

ANS. — Churches are built, we ought rather to say, for the purpose of worshipping God, and promoting in men the religious life, — the life of Christ. Therefore they may well be opened to one who preaches, as Mr. Parker does, the doctrine of duty, — the doctrine of Christ as the teacher of *infallible* because *absolute* truth, and the guide in a perfect way.

“Is the minister faithful to his trust, who brings before his own people, and puts in his own place, a teacher of opinions which he conscientiously believes to be radically false, subversive of a true faith and a stedfast piety?”

ANSWERED, by another question. Is that minister faithful to *his* trust, who, for fear of a little heresy in speculation, will forego the exhibition to his people of that charity and toleration which is “the bond of perfectness?” Is not *charity* placed by the Apostle far above even *faith*? And will a minister or people who *have* a strong faith and charity be likely to arrogate infallibility or show a timid concern lest some opposite doctrine shake their own to pieces? To us it seems that such anxiety argues only a *want* of faith, or at least a *weakness* of it.

“Shall a Christian preacher encourage, and afford all facilities for the diffusion of views which he cannot, by any possible logic, separate from Deism?”

ANS. — There is nothing so likely to aggravate and give increase to what we call *heresy* as a mean spirited or violent opposition to

it. It is said of certain zoophytes, called polypi, that if you cut them in pieces every piece will grow into a separate polypus; and so it is in regard to our treatment of heretics. *Cut* them and you will only *multiply* them. Treat them kindly or with indifference and they will be less likely to be strongly reduplicated. Who believes that this towering flame of Mr. Parker's *heresy*, so called, would have reached the height which it has, unless it had been blown upon first by the breath of a few fanatics? On them, therefore, be the blame of the subsequent conflagration.

"Shall he ask his neighbor to come and do all he can to destroy the work of his own hands, and to defeat the objects of his own toils and prayers? to weaken men's reverence for the Holy Scriptures? to prove that Jesus Christ was either egregiously mistaken, or else a gross impostor? that prophecy is all sheer delusion, and the resurrection a lie?"

ANS. — He may and *ought* to invite his neighbor to the pulpit if he preach as Mr. Parker *does*, to save souls and to rebuke hypocrisy. And, after all, what strength can there be in the fabric of faith which other ministers have raised, if Mr. Parker, by a single sermon, can so easily overthrow it?

"Shall the Christian preacher be imposed upon by the shallow plea that he must commit all this folly and mischief, for the sake of charity and liberality, and to escape the charge of inconsistency?"

ANS. — Shall he be a *worse* fool and mischiefmaker by seeking to stop the mouth of his brother and thus make "*liberal Christianity*," so called, a bye-word and a reproach, while bigotry and fanaticism laugh in their sleeves and the minions of exclusiveness clap their hands, and cry, with well-directed irony, "Here they are, on our side," and, "See how these Christians love one another."

"May not the Calvinists have been illiberal possibly in excluding Unitarians from their pulpits, and yet the Unitarians be liberal in excluding Mr. Parker?"

ANS. — Oh yes. Very likely, — in the opinion of Unitarian exclusives themselves, because, — "*circumstances alter cases!*"

"Can there be a greater, more essential, more radical theological difference respecting Christianity, than that which obtains between Mr. Parker and any believer in Christ as the faultless and the infallible and the miraculously endowed Son of God, risen from the dead?"

ANSWERED, by another query. Could there be "a greater, more essential, or more radical difference" respecting the mission of Christ than that which obtained between Jesus Christ and his

disciples? How imperfectly did they sympathise with him? Yet he considered and retained them as his disciples.

"But then, is it quite certain that all the Calvinists have been illiberal in this regard,—in declining exchanges with Unitarians?"

ANS. — No. We contend that Calvinists have *not* been illiberal at all, in this particular, because, they never *professed* liberality in the same sense as Unitarians.

"If some have acted from narrow and sectarian prejudices, may not others among them have acted from the soundest convictions? and acted wisely?"

ANS. — Certainly. Their consistency places them far above Unitarians in this particular.

"Would it not be a mistake to establish the general custom of exchanging, between the promulgators of schemes so unlike?"

ANS. — Is it "a mistake" in God to allow different motives to sway the same bosom at different times,—thus occupying as it were, *the same pulpit*?

"Would there be anything gained by it after all? Neither preacher hearing the other's arguments or representations, (being absent on the exchange,) and each if true to his duty preaching the doctrines he holds, must not the inevitable result be to turn the sacred altar into an arena of the most unprofitable sort of controversy, throwing the people into a deplorable agitation and perplexity, and preventing all spiritual edification, which is the grand purpose of the ministry?"

ANS. — Poor weak creatures! These dear people! What a friendly concern our querist seems to have lest they suffer by their susceptibility to — "*the latest form of infidelity*!"

"Is it not the more sensible course to have doctrines, *generally similar*, on the most vital of all topics, presented from the same place, that men may understand what to depend upon?"

ANS. — In other words;—Had we not better have our creed "stereotyped?" Are not stereotyped sermons the best? Is there not more safety under a *monotony of ministrations*? No doubt, according to "the Graham system," bran bread may be very good, but nobody wants to eat even *that*, — *all* the time.

"Going where they please, by all means ought they not still to find and hear what they were seeking?"

ANS. — In other words, ought they ever to hear that which does not suit their consciences or their tastes? Ought the preachers ever to offend them? Ought not the hearers "*going where they please*," to be sure of finding all the preaching, in every direction, fully in accordance with their previous notions and prejudice?

Ought they to *wish* to know or practice anything more or differently from what they already do? "Going where they please" — ought they to *please* to go anywhere but for the hearing of that which they already know? Now all this may be very astute kind of logic, but may well be offset by this one simple question — If the hearers *know already* what they are seeking why seek it at all, — anywhere?

"Is not the world wide enough to grant space for all sects, without compelling them to cross each other's paths?"

Ans. — It were far better for all sects if they *did* oftener "cross each other's paths," and grasp each other's hands, and understand, fairly, each other's views. Then should we hear less of this invidious and vile misrepresentation of other creeds, and have less of this wicked want of charity, which is killing the church.

"Would such interchanges really promote Christian love, or really promote dissension and confusion?"

Ans. — That depends, of course, on the spirit in which they should be conducted. If a desire only for *truth* and *toleration* rather than the progress or triumph of a sect were the ruling motive, and if each would simply tell their honest thought with all charity for the other, — aiming chiefly to make their hearers *practical Christians*, then, of course, no less than "Christian love" would be the issue and the fruit of such exchanges.

"Is a clergyman faithful to his ordination vows who causes things to be preached to his society which his society were very far from engaging and employing him to preach? Would not that be a virtual breach of contract?"

Ans. — A CONTRACT forsooth! Is it so? And for *what* do the people and ministers contract? Is it not rather in the name of truth and charity, for the spiritual interests of the flock, according to the *minister's* best understanding of those interests, or is it only that the minister shall continue, in a circular kind of ministration, to ring changes on certain articles of faith which the people understand full well enough, and but too well already? Is this the contract? In other words are we to suppose the minister at his ordination to take upon him some such pledge as the following? "I, the Rev. Mr. A. B., do hereby promise my constituents, that, so far as I am concerned, I will do all I can to prevent their spiritual or intellectual progress, and that they shall never hear anything but '*smooth preaching*' so long as they live. 'So help me God.'"



"Have not the owners of a meeting-house an entire right to determine who shall preach in it?"

ANS. — Oh yes! Certainly; and to ordain *echoes* if they will, and cast nothing but their own shadows on its wall.

"If the minister is dissatisfied with his bargain and their wishes, is it not the only manly course for him, to obey his conscience and quietly resign and withdraw, leaving the society to exercise their rights in their own way?"

ANS. — Perhaps so. But how does this meet the case of Mr. Parker? *His people* do not wish him to leave them.

"Should it be said that there is nothing to fear from any man's tongue, that truth will conquer, and error must fail and die, and that it is best to speak and hear everything? Then, does this mean that we should *assist* error, help it in the fight, lead it on, put weapons into its hands, retire and give it our own position, and so prolong the battle and the battle's misery?"

ANS. — Is your truth or faith so weak that you *fear* the conflict with error? Will the truth suffer by close contrast with error? And will you call it *assisting* error to allow it full scope for such contrast, to exercise and fatigue itself on the field? Never fear, my timid friend; — for, to use the words of another — "Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?" Give error full play then, and be sure that truth will bear it down at the last if it *be* error.

"Is this our duty? Have we grown so strong and confident, that we may do all this? What, in the name of all that is loyal, should we be, then, but traitors, and disguised *enemies* of the truth?"

ANS. — The courageous and tolerant and hopeful *champions* of truth.

"Because Christianity bids mankind, — clergymen included, — love *all* their fellow men, must those clergymen go and exchange with Mormons, Mahometans, Millerites, Tartars, Idiots, Jews, Hindoos, Pantheists or Deists?"

ANS. — The Mormons, Mahometans, Tartars, Idiots, &c., might well teach a lesson of charity to some who profess and call themselves "*liberal* Christians;" but what has this inquiry to do with the main question at issue in regard to exchanges with Mr. Parker? He comes, rightly, under neither of the classes above enumerated. He professes to be and he is a UNITARIAN minister, and the question of fellowship is between him and *Unitarians* as such.

"Is not common sense applicable to the clerical profession, as well as others?"

ANS. — Certainly. We have always thought so, and that *charity* and *toleration* had some relation to common sense and, consequently they who violate or infringe the obligation to these cardinal virtues of the clerical profession, may be said to have *lost their senses* and sold their birthright. *It is because we would have common sense applied to the clerical profession that we advocate a fellowship with Mr. Parker.*

"Are not exchanges to be regulated by wisdom, discretion and conscience?"

ANS. — Yes. Oh yes! Exactly! That's just what we want, — precisely what we are contending for. "WISDOM, DISCRETION, and CONSCIENCE!"

"When shall we three meet again?" — *Shakespeare.*

"Does a minister owe nothing to the souls of his people, and the cause of his Master, but everything to a crotchet in his own excited or one-sided brain?"

ANS. — "Everything to a crotchet in his own excited brain," of course, understanding this to be, in other words, ("being interpreted,") *the law of God in his own convictions of duty*, — "a crotchet" which takes various forms in different people, — as we often see.

"Is it not an absurd fallacy to suppose that the only or the decisive way of proving a minister's good-will and brotherly love, and generous sympathies, is to bring him to an exchange of pulpits with any individual on earth, especially with one whose influence and doctrine on the most sacred fundamental themes are directly opposite to his own? Would not wisdom and duty dictate to each of two such parties to abide by its own sphere, adhere to its own cause, oppress not the other, serve its own master, and reap its own harvest?"

ANS. — Well; — and what *is* the harvest, which, in most cases, we find to be reaped by such an exclusive course of reservation? SELFISHNESS, BIGOTRY, and SPIRITUAL PRIDE, which says, "stand aside, for we are wiser and holier than thou;" countless and increasing subdivisions of the Christian church; crowds of "Comeouters;" A JEALOUS, SECTARIAN TEMPER; an arrogant, haughty, and dogmatical deportment; a decaying church; *a meagre ministry*, and *a sleepy and slender congregation*; ignorance of other views, because of *an unwillingness to hear them preached*, and, as a consequence of that ignorance, the most unchristian spirit of intolerance toward them, as exhibited in the several questions of the tract we have now despatched.

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# REMARKS

ON AN

ARTICLE FROM THE CHRISTIAN EXAMINER,

ENTITLED

“MR. PARKER AND HIS VIEWS.”

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BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS.

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J. P. WILSON



A FRIEND put Dr. Gannett's Article into our hands, with the request that we would write him our thoughts upon it. What we wrote seemed worthy of publication, and has accordingly been printed. We have made free use of Dr. Gannett's name, presuming it perfectly well known that he was the author of the Article. We would have appended our own, if we had thought that any but our personal friends would have been the wiser for knowing it.

26 *March*, 1845.



## REMARKS.

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It is matter of rejoicing, that there is one man who can take up the subject of Mr. Parker's doctrines in a right spirit, — who can do something better than raise the cry of heretic and infidel, and make garbled and unfair extracts from his writings, — who is willing to recognize his opponents as also seekers after truth, and to argue with them in a serious and Christian spirit. For this we thank him, and are ready to meet him in the same spirit.

It is no light matter that is brought into debate, — no less than the true grounds of religious belief, — the foundation of religious faith. Let us not make it a subject of wrangling dispute ; let us treat it as it should be treated, — as the most serious question that can come before us, — a question, that, for the sake of our peace of mind and all our highest interests, we *must* follow out till we arrive at clear convictions. We have arrived at such a satisfying conviction of the truth of the doctrines which the author of this article endeavours to controvert. They satisfy our wants, and help us to lead a religious life, and are to us a far truer and more precious faith than the views he advocates ; and we would endeavour to state them with what power we may, and answer the objections he has brought against them.

*Our* religious faith, then, rests on that evidence which Mr.

Gannett reckons so treacherous and unsound. We believe the truths that Jesus uttered in no degree because of the miracles he wrought. We believe them, because our mind recognizes their intrinsic truth, because we cannot help believing; and this we hold to be the true ground of faith for all men, and because it is the true ground, we hold it to be the firmest and most enduring. But the doctrine requires more than a bare statement. Let us endeavour to give it a clearer exposition. We hold, then, that God has given all men the power to attain a religious faith that needs no external evidence to support it. Nay more, we believe that the deepest and truest religious faith *is not capable* of support from any outward evidence whatever. We state our belief as strongly as possible, that it may be open to all possible objections. We believe that men have recourse to outward evidence through the weakness of their faith, that in proportion as true faith increases, this evidence, if it ever had a value, loses it, till at length that perfect faith we should all endeavour to attain rejects it altogether. Moreover, we believe that the most deeply religious minds *never*, in any stage of progress, have any thing to do with such gross outward helps to their belief. To tell them to believe on the evidence of signs and wonders, to offer to prop up their faith by argument and logic, is to do violence to all their deepest and most sacred feelings. With hearts overflowing with love, and reverence, and gratitude to God, seeing him in all that is glorious and beautiful around them, feeling him within and about them everywhere, walking in his presence daily “as with a Father and a Friend,”—what care such men for logic and cunning reasoning,—what care they for signs and wonders? All around them is wonderful, for they see God in all.

Such men live on the *words* of Jesus, not his miracles. They receive them gladly, and do not wait to see the marks of the nails that they may believe. Tell them a deep religious truth, and they cannot but believe, though all evidence were *against* it. For truth is native to their souls. God has made them of that nature that they cannot be deceived. Their



minds are touchstones, whereon to try all words and thoughts, and prove whether they be true.

Now such a faith is not gained through logic. Such a faith does not reason. It never says, "Because." Millions of signs and wonders would not make that true which it pronounced false, and it asks not for wonders to prove that true which bears within itself its own most perfect evidence. In them, faith and reasoning are opposed. They believe God because he is their Father. Their minds are open to his influences. They stand really in his presence. They know, and feel, and love him. Do they need reasoning and evidence? As well attempt to *argue* that child into love for an earthly parent, in whose presence he always lives, and whose love he is ever feeling.

Now what these men are, all men ought to be. What these men are, all men can be. For God has made men of one nature, and has not left himself without a witness in the heart of any one. It is within the capacity of all men to reach this point of faith. As God has given us an eye, and provided beauty for its satisfaction, and an ear, and all sweet sounds to delight it, as we have a heart to love, and earthly objects of affection for that heart to cling to, and an intellect, and great and noble subjects whereon to exercise it: so, deeper, and higher, and nobler, and more truly *human* than all these, have we a religious nature, an inborn capacity for receiving truths of God, and heaven, and immortality, and all *unearthly* things. This is not intellect; it is not reasoning. It has nothing whatever to do with these. It *cannot* depend upon them. It is *faith*, the power of apprehending the unseen and the invisible, — the power of rising above the earth to heaven.

We hold that this is most peculiarly a faculty of man as man. It is that which makes him man, that which raises him above and separates him from all other creatures, and makes him "a little lower than the angels." It is this belief that makes the miracles unnecessary even to us. We have better, truer, stronger, evidence. We believe because we *know* that Christ's words are true, and need not any evidence to prove

it. No miracles and no arguments could make that belief stronger. We are happy to believe the truth of some of the miracles. They are beautiful facts, and we love them, because they make us better acquainted with the glorious and beautiful character of Jesus. *But we believe the miracles because we believe the words, not the words because we believe the miracles.* If it were not for the words of Jesus, we could not believe the story of his wonders ; for then our faith must rest on the obscure and doubtful ground of fallible historic evidence. But those deep words of truth, those revelations of God's own thoughts, prove that here was a man who could do such deeds, and things are credible and natural in him, that could not be believed of any that uttered less pure and holy words.

Now, instead of this faith, founded as it is in the depths of our own nature and which cannot fail us while our nature remains the same, which lies within the reach of all men, however few there are that now believe it, what is offered us as better and surer ? The belief in the miracles. And what is the nature of this belief ? Does it not depend on fallible human evidence, and is the power to weigh such evidence, the "logic faculty," to be set above the power God has given each of us to enter immediately his presence, above the spontaneous testimony of all that is best within us, that his words are true ? Grant what Dr. Gannett affirms, that no evidence can be more conclusive than that in favor of the miracles of Jesus, — what *kind* of evidence is it ? Am I condemned to rest my faith, my dearest and best possession, the pearl above price for which I should give up all, — must this depend on the uncertain testimony of ancient books, and the fallible investigations of learned men ? Will any one who values his religious faith be willing to rest it on such evidence, which fire may destroy, and time consume ? Is religion of that earthly nature that it is dependent on such accidents ? Suppose, by some strange chance, all the records of the life of Jesus, all testimony that he had ever lived, were swept from the earth, and the history of his being became the very shad-

ow of a tradition, would "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and thy God with all thy heart," — words which some good men among us might still remember, — be the less true for that? Would they not still be to us the highest rule of life, the sum and substance of religion?

But, it is replied, "These very words you first received through that miraculous revelation you reject. You would not have had them to remember otherwise." Not so, we answer; for just as we believe that the power has been given us not only of giving a cold intellectual assent to religious truths when offered to us by others, but of receiving them into our very being, making them, by the power of faith and love, a portion of our own spiritual nature, so we believe that God has given the power to great spirits among mankind first to discover and impart such truth to their fellow-men. As Newton, by the power of a great intellect, discovered the laws of the material world, so God has given the power to great religious spirits to make new discoveries in the realms of moral and religious truth, and thus to become the teachers, and guides, and saviours of their erring fellow-men. We need no theory of a *special* revelation and a divine nature to make this credible to us. To our mind, such a theory only weakens the truth it would support. The idea of a special revelation is at variance with our highest and most satisfying view of God. It seems to us a poor and narrow notion, borrowed from our own finite imperfections. It brings us no nearer God. It only strives to bring God down to us. It weakens our reverence, but in no degree augments our love. We choose to see God revealed in every thing. We recognize him as inspiring all great and noble men, as living and immanent in all goodness. Do we thereby detract from the greatness of Jesus? By no means. Can we not believe, as we most sincerely do, that no man was with the Father in this life, as Jesus was, that no man approached him in purity and goodness, that no man is to be mentioned with him, or compared to him. All this we believe, and we feel that such belief cannot degrade the character of Jesus. We believe



that he preached absolute goodness, and truth that cannot be set aside. But we would not set bounds to God's omnipotence, and, in a vain attempt to increase his honor, degrade the creatures he has made in his own image. We believe that the character that was realized in Jesus shows us only the possibilities of *our* nature. He is not a God set over us to rule us, but a brother-man who only led the life we *should* lead.

Is the corruption of the world and the wickedness of men opposed as an argument against us? But we all have an ideal of the perfection of human nature, which we all acknowledge we should strive to attain. Now can we admit into that ideal of *our* humanity any wilful sin and imperfection? No. It must embrace perfect religion and perfect virtue. But could Jesus have more than perfect virtue? What, then, had he which does not enter into our idea of our own humanity? If it is answered, superhuman power, we ask, To what end imagine this, only to develop the possibilities of *human* nature? Is it not better to believe that that power which seems to us superhuman was really the fruit and necessary attendant of perfect goodness? Who shall set bounds to spiritual power, or who shall say that he knows God's laws so well, that he can declare them broken?

We have thus imperfectly set forth the grounds of our belief. We think them the firmest and surest, because they are drawn from the very nature of the human mind, and cannot fail us while that remains the same. God has adapted our minds to truth, made it their proper food and nourishment, made it our duty to seek it, and given us full power to attain it.

In opposition to this view, Dr. Gannett affirms, that "all religious truth which it is important that we should know cannot be discovered by the reasoning or the intuitive faculty," — by which we understand him to imply, that it cannot be discovered by *any* unassisted faculty of the human mind. He makes the assertion; we know not how he will prove it. To us it seems unphilosophical to affirm, that a higher degree of that faculty which enables us to *comprehend* religious truth cannot also *dis-*



cover it. No one affirms that, because we could not have *discovered* the laws of gravitation, therefore the mind of Newton was of a different *nature* from our own. Why should we argue thus of the mind of Christ? What constitutes this difference between religious and all other truth, and on whose authority is it said that the mind of man is incapable of attaining it. But Dr. Gannett says, “*In point of fact* this recognition of truth by man’s higher nature has not been equal to man’s wants, either in its discovery or its confirmation.” But this is taking for granted the very point in question. We affirm that Jesus was a man. We claim the truths which he uttered, which Mr. Gannett himself considers equal to man’s wants, as truths revealed to us by unassisted reason. The burden of proof that something more was needed rests with him. The doctrines of transubstantiation and the invocation of saints, and many others, were once reckoned necessary for man’s wants. Most of us do not think so now. We affirm our faith to be the simplest, the most rational, the most intelligible; that the idea of a “special” revelation, a “miraculous interposition,” is the “theory.”

Dr. Gannett says, “How do we know that they (the intuitions of truth) are not erroneous? It is idle to say that they cannot be, for if any one should affirm that they are, the one affirmation is as good as the other”; and elsewhere he says, that, with the view we are advocating, “we may trust the accounts which we have of our Lord’s words as little as the accounts of his actions.” “Why shall we believe that Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount, with the parables, the rebukes, the beautiful beatitudes, contains what was said by Jesus? Or why place any confidence in John’s narration, either of what was done or said in that upper chamber, whence we have been accustomed to think so much instruction has come to us?” Strange, incredibly strange, appears to us such reasoning! Does Dr. Gannett mean to affirm that the precept, Thou shalt *hate* thy God with all thy heart, is as good as Thou shalt love him, unless this last be supported by the evidence of miracles? or does he mean to say, that the Sermon on the Mount is all as nothing to him, unless it is proved with perfect

certainly that it was uttered by the being he calls Jesus ? Suppose that all of the Gospels save that Sermon were struck out of existence : — would it not still remain the truest religion in the world, *and should we not recognize it as such ?*

Again, is Dr. Gannett prepared to believe that God's mercy and forgiveness have bounds and limits, unless the contrary is proved to him by a miraculous revelation ? Does not our whole nature rise up against a low and limited idea of God ? Did not heathen nations, in proportion as they became purer and more humane and spiritual, constantly by their own *unassisted* reason elevate and purify their idea of God ? and by what authority does Dr. Gannett affirm that the human mind must stop in the progress of its idea before it reaches *perfect* goodness and perfect love. Suppose that Jesus had never lived ; — in all these eighteen hundred years, would no great and good men have arisen to give us worthier notions of religion, while on all other subjects the human mind was advancing with such giant strides ? Grant that we should not have advanced so fast, — grant that our views, even now, would have been far less perfect, if Jesus had never lived, — we grant it willingly ; — yet this does not prove that he revealed the more *by any other way* than we should have learned the less without him. We cannot believe that God intended the human mind to stand still, or make but feeble and useless efforts to attain that knowledge which of all others is most precious and important to it, while it roamed at large, and made vast conquests in all the other realms of thought. And see, though since his day no man approaching him in the power of goodness has yet appeared, yet see, even still, how the work of goodness has been carried on, what mighty applications of its power have been made to the crimes of sinful men, what new discoveries in every age of the relations of moral truth to the wants of the time, by men, who, towering in the might of purity and goodness far above their fellows, were as truly inspired to do their work, though in far less degree, as Jesus was.

We thank God for Jesus. We rejoice that, so early in the world's history, one appeared who could shed such light on all

the subject dearest and most important to us. We do not, as our enemies say we do, depreciate the character of Jesus, because we believe him to have been a man. We say with them, "Never man spake like this man." We freely and gladly acknowledge that he rises above all other great men in the world's history, even as perfection is above weakness and imperfection. He is unapproached as yet, — we cannot say unapproachable, for we know not what it is in God's providence to create. He is therefore to us, too, as well as to them, a guide in the darkness of our sin, strength in the weakness of our imperfection, our Saviour, — but not our God. Surely this is not an irreligious view. Surely, in the multitude of faiths, this too might claim the name of Christian.

We cannot, then, allow, that bounds are to be set to the discoveries of the human mind in religious truth. We claim the discoveries of Jesus as discoveries of the human mind, we place our firmest faith in them, not because we read in certain old books, which fortunately have come down to us, that their utterance was attended with strange signs and wonders, but because our whole moral nature rises up to proclaim them true, because the moral sense of the world unites in giving them belief.

Is it said that sometimes we may be mistaken, and put error for truth, and substitute our own imaginings for the everlasting rule of right? We grant it; we know of no rule, in the church or out of it, for making men infallible. A supernatural revelation has yet to be naturally interpreted, and how much error in the garb of truth, and how much sin in the guise of virtue, that has produced, the history of the church will show. Wicked men will continue to make virtue the cloak of vice, and foolish men will continue to mistake error for truth, whatever doctrines we may preach. The question is not how doctrines may be abused, but what is absolute truth. Meantime, let us point out what seem to us some of the mischiefs that arise from the view we have been combating. By putting Jesus without the reach of imitation, we lower the standard of human effort, we take away our highest and fairest example,



our most inspiring guide. Can we not see the effects of this in the character of our religion, — a religion of the head and not of the heart, a cold and reasoning assent to doctrines imposed upon us by outward authority, a blind obedience, little better than the Orthodox fear of hell ? This seems to us the result of such belief ; not a spontaneous and hearty love, not a living faith that all truth and goodness are native to the soul, that no less than perfect virtue is the aim to which, in God's own time, man may attain even here on earth.

We have taken Jesus from among us, and, alas ! in our vain attempts to honor him, we have degraded our own natures, and forgotten our birthright. We have no faith in our own powers. If we really looked on man as the child of God, and still saw his image even in the most degraded, should we be willing to believe Jesus too perfect to be a man, and make him the despair instead of the hope of the race ? And what doctrine can we best preach to sinful and degraded men ? — that which lowers their standard of excellence and teaches them to rely on outward authority for their religion, or that which teaches them of the divinity within them, of their own high capacities, and their own powers of self-recovery ? — we say it, though we have heard much of the sinfulness of trusting to feeble reason, and the arm of flesh. We cannot enter into Dr. Gannett's fears for the *sanity* of men who embrace such doctrines.

Doubtless Dr. Gannett has pointed out the mode in which such doctrines may be most easily abused. Doubtless there will be foolish young men and women, who will be forward, bold, and rash, who will disregard the wisdom of experience and put their own crude notions in the place of truth. But how much of this comes of their breaking away from what they see to have been unjust restraint ? We have no fears for those who are taught a reverent self-respect, neither do we, as Dr. Gannett implies, cast away the authority of the goodness of great men, because we do not rest our faith on the material records of their lives. But, after all, does Dr. Gannett need to be reminded of the old truism of the abuse of good things ? Are not the doctrines he would consider most orthodox open



to their own peculiar forms of abuse? There are foolish men and women in the church as well as out of it. It is hardly worth while to draw an argument from them on either side.

On the mischief of connecting that which all men hold true and sacred with what some men cannot believe, we will not enlarge, because our opponents think it all should be believed; but we think that Dr. Gannett cannot help finding, in these days, many a man who gladly and firmly believes the truths Jesus uttered, when offered him alone, but who would have to go through many doubts if forced to couple the miracles with them.

Neither will we notice the page which Dr. Gannett devotes to proving that our views destroy the value of all historical evidence, except to express our unfeigned astonishment at it. We cannot think it needs a serious refutation.

Of the subject of the last part of Mr. Gannett's article, the treatment of Mr. Parker by his brethren, we have but little here to say. We have never doubted the *right* of people or minister to exclude any man from their pulpit who was not agreeable to them. The buildings they call churches are their own, and the laws of the land secure to them their free possession. They may use them for the hearing of one side of questions, or for the hearing of words merely; — they have the right to do so. But whether it is Christian to refuse a man of blameless life and earnest spirit, preaching what he believes great truths, a hearing in them; whether it is consistent, for "liberal" Christians, who boast they have no creed, to exclude one of their number, simply for using the same freedom they claim themselves; finally, whether it is wise or politic, and whether it will serve their own cause, to brand him as a heretic, — on these questions there seems room for two very distinct and opposite opinions.



A

# LETTER

TO THE

BOSTON ASSOCIATION

OF

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS,

TOUCHING CERTAIN MATTERS OF THEIR THEOLOGY.

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BY THEODORE PARKER,

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN ROXBURY.

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BOSTON:

CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN.

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## LETTER.

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GENTLEMEN :

The peculiar circumstances of the last few years have placed both you and me in new relations to the public, and to one another. Your recent actions constrain me to write you this public letter that all may the more fully understand the matter at issue between us, and the course you design to pursue. You are a portion of the Unitarian body, and your opinions and conduct will no doubt have some influence upon that body. You have, I am told, at great length, and in several consecutive meetings discussed the subject of my connection with your reverend body ; you have debated the matter whether you should expel me for heresy, and by a circuitous movement, recently made, have actually excluded me from preaching the Thursday Lecture. I do not call in question your motives, for it is not my office to judge you, neither do I now complain of your conduct, public or private, towards me during the last three years. That has been various. Some members of your association have uniformly treated me with the courtesy common amongst gentlemen ; some also with the civilities that are usual amongst ministers of the same denomination. Towards some of your number I entertain an affectionate gratitude for the good words I have heard from their lips in

my youth. I feel a great regard for some of you, on account of their noble and christian characters, virtuous, self-denying, pious and without bigotry. I cherish no unkind feelings towards the rest of you ; towards none of you do I feel ill-will on account of what has past. I have treated my opponents with a forbearance which, I think has not always been sufficiently appreciated by such as have had the chief benefit of that forbearance. However, I hope never to be driven either by abuse from an opponent, or by the treachery of a pretended friend, to depart from the course of forbearance which I have hitherto, and uniformly, pursued.

But since you have, practically, taken so decided a stand, and have so frequently discussed me and my affairs among yourselves, and have at last made your movement, I think it important that the public should have a distinct knowledge of your theological position. I am searching for Truth, however humbly, and I suppose that you are as desirous of imparting to others as of receiving it from Heaven ; therefore I shall proceed to ask you certain questions, a good deal talked of at the present day, to which I venture to ask a distinct and categorical reply. But, by way of preliminary, I will first refresh your memory with a few facts.

Until recently the Unitarians have been supposed to form the advance-guard, so to say, of the church militant ; at least they have actually been the *Movement party in Theology*. It may hurt the feelings of some men, now, to confess it, but I think it is true. As such, the Unitarians have done a great work. As I understand the matter, this work was in part *intellectual* — for they really advanced theological science

both negatively, by the exposure of errors, and positively by the establishment of truths ; — but in greater part *moral*, for they declared either directly, or by implication, the right of each man to investigate for himself in matters pertaining to Religion, and his right also to the Christian name if he claimed it, and by his character seemed to deserve it. They called themselves “ liberal ” Christians, and seemed to consider that he was the best Christian who was most like Christ in character and life, thus making Religion the essential of Christianity, and leaving each man to determine his own Theology. They began their history by a denial of the Trinity, a doctrine very dear to the Christian Church, of very ancient standing therein, common alike to Catholics and Protestants, — a doctrine for centuries regarded as essential to the Christian scheme, the fundamental dogma of Christianity. For this denial they encountered the usual fate of the movement party ; — they were denied Christian fellowship, and got a bad name, which they keep even now. I am told that they are still called “ Infidels ” by the Trinitarian leaders, and that, you know, gentlemen, is a term of great reproach in the theological world. It has been asserted, I think, in some Orthodox journal, that the lamented Dr. Channing, whose name is now perhaps praised by your association oftener than his example is followed, undoubtedly went to hell for his sin in denying that Jesus of Nazareth was the infinite God. Gentlemen, these things happened not a great many years ago. I do not wonder at the treatment the Unitarians have received, and still receive, where they are not numerous and powerful, for the Trinitarians maintain that no one can be saved

without a belief in certain doctrines of their Theology, which very doctrines the Unitarians stoutly denied, and in public too. The Orthodox were consistent in what the Unitarians then regarded as persecution, and, I doubt not, would have used the old arguments, Fagots and the Axe — had not the laws of the land rendered it quite impossible to resort to this ultimate standard of theological appeal, which had been a favorite with many of the clergy for more than fourteen centuries. The Unitarians complained of that treatment as not altogether Christian.

But now, Gentlemen, it seems to me that some of you are pursuing the same course you once complained of, and if I rightly apprehend the Theology of your learned body — of which however I am not quite sure — without the same consistency, having no warrant therefor in your theological system. I say nothing of your motives in all this; nothing of the spirit in which some of you have acted. That matter is beyond my reach; to your own master you stand or fall. In 1841 I preached a sermon at South Boston, at an Ordination. That was soon attacked by the Rev. Mr. Fairchild, and numerous other clergymen, of several denominations, equally zealous for the Christian faith. Since that time most of you have refused me the ministerial courtesies commonly shown to the ministers of the same denomination. And yet, gentlemen, I think these courtesies are not, in all denominations, withheld when one of the parties has a moral reputation that is at least ambiguous. Only five of your number I believe have since exchanged with me, though comparatively but few members of other Unitarian associations



have departed from their former course. I do not complain of this ; — I simply state the fact.

Now Gentlemen, there is one matter on which you will allow me to pause a moment. The Fraternity of Churches is, I suppose virtually, though not formally, under the direction of certain members of your association. Now that Fraternity has virtually expelled from his office a minister engaged in a noble and Christian work, and performing that work with rare ability and success. You have thus expelled him from his place, simply because he extended ministerial fellowship to me in common with ministers of several other denominations. The case of Mr. Sargent is peculiar, and I must dwell a moment on a few particulars respecting it. If I rightly remember, his family contributed largely to the erection and embellishment of the Chapel out of which he is expelled. He has himself spent freely his own property for the Poor under his charge, and has been untiring in his labors. No shadow of reproach attaches to his name. He is above suspicion of immorality ; but on the contrary, is distinguished beyond his fellows by the excellence of his character, and the nobleness of his life. A righteous and a self-denying man, he went out into the lanes and highways of Boston gathering together the poor and the forsaken, and formed a society which prospered under his ministry and became strongly attached to him. And yet, Gentlemen, some of you have seen fit, knowing all these circumstances, by demanding of him a pledge that he would never exchange with me — to drive away from the field of his labors and the arms of his parish this noble man — solely be-

cause he extended the usual ministerial fellowship to me, and yet I still continue a member of your association ! I think he has never been accused, perhaps not suspected, of preaching in his pulpit, or even believing in his study, the peculiar doctrines of my own Theology, which are so obnoxious to some of you, and apparently reckoned worse than a grave moral offence. It may be said that Mr. Sargent was minister over a *Vassal-church* and the Fraternity were his *Feudal superiors*, and this seems to be true. You will say, furthermore, that the Boston Association as a whole, is not responsible for the acts of the Fraternity and this is doubtless the case, but as I think some of its members are accountable, to them let the above remarks apply. I pass to another matter.

The Unitarians have no recognized and public Creed. It used to be their glory. At the Theological School in Cambridge I subscribed no Symbolical Books ; at my ordination I assented to no form of doctrines — neither Church nor Council requesting it. When I became a member of your learned body, no one asked me of my opinions, whether orthodox or heterodox. No one even demanded a promise that I should never change an opinion or discover a new truth ! I know well, Gentlemen, that I differ and that very widely from the systems of Theology which are taught, and from the Philosophy which underlies those systems. I have no wish to disguise my Theology, nor shelter it beneath the authority of your association. Let it stand or fall by itself. But still, I do not know that I have transgressed the limits of Unitarianism, for I do not know what those limits are. It is a great glory

to a liberal association to have no Symbolical Books, but a great inconvenience that a sect becoming exclusive should not declare its Creed. I cannot utter the *Shibboleth* of a party till I first hear it pronounced in the orthodox way. I shall presently proceed to beg you to point out the limits of scientific freedom, and tell the *maximum* of theological belief which distinguishes you from the "Orthodox" on the one side, and the *minimum* thereof, which distinguishes you from the "Infidels" on the other side.

Gentlemen, you refuse me fellowship ; you discuss the question whether you shall expel me from your association, and you actually, though indirectly, prohibit me, as I understand it, from preaching "the great and Thursday Lecture." Gentlemen, I wish to know distinctly the ground you take in this matter. It is not altogether plain why you put yourselves in your peculiar attitude towards me. Mr. Sargent is expelled for granting me ministerial fellowship. He was an accessory after the fact in my alleged heresies — and being but a Vassal of the Fraternity, and therefore within their power, is punished while the Principal of the mischief is allowed to go unscathed, and other clergymen who exchange with me, but have no feudal lords, retain their places as before. Here the issue is obvious, and Mr. Sargent is expelled from his pulpit for *positive Misprision of Heresy*, if I may make use of such a term. Of course the same decree excludes him from his pulpit and the association. But I am told that Mr. Pierpont was quite as effectually excluded from the actual fellowship of your association, as even myself ; for while three of the city members of your associa-



tion have continued to extend ministerial fellowship to me — Mr. Pierpont, Mr. Sargent and Mr. Clarke, — only three, — Mr. Gannett, Mr. Sargent and Mr. Clarke — if I am rightly informed, have extended that fellowship to him since the time of the famed Hollis-Street Council! Yet I think he is guilty of no heresy, — *theological* and *speculative* heresy I mean, for in practical affairs it is well known that his course is the opposite of that pursued by most of his brethren in the city.

Still more, at a conference I had with the association, a little more than two years ago, the Chairman of the association — the Rev. Dr. Parkman, declared that my main offence was not my theological heresies, they would have been forgiven and forgot, had it not been for an article I published on the Hollis-Street Council (printed in the Dial for Oct. 1842,) in which, as he alleged, I “poured scorn and contempt upon the Brethren.” Yet others charge me with heresies, and on account thereof I am told, actually deny my right to Christian fellowship from them, and even my title to the Christian name.

In this intricate confusion, Gentlemen, you will probably see the necessity of saying a word to put all things in a fair light, that I may know on what point you and I are really at issue. Notwithstanding the remarks of the Rev. Dr. Parkman, I am still inclined to the belief that the charge of heresy is the main charge, and as you have had the field of controversy entirely to yourselves these several years, and as yet have not, as a body, made a public and authorized statement of your theological belief, I must beg you to inform me what is ORTHODOXY according to the Boston Association. The Orthodoxy of the



Catholic Church I know very well ; I am not wholly ignorant of what is called Orthodox by the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches ; but the ORTHODOXY of the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers is not a thing so easy to come at. As I try to comprehend it, I feel I am looking at something dim and undefined. It changes color, and it changes shape ; now it seems a mountain ; then it appears like a cloud. You will excuse me, Gentlemen, — but, though I have been more than seven years a member of your reverend body, I do not altogether comprehend your Theology — nor know what is Orthodox. You will do a great service, if you will publish your Symbolical Books, and let the world know what is the true doctrine according to the Boston Association of Congregational Ministers. I have defined my own position as well as I could, and will presently beg you to reply distinctly, categorically and unequivocally to the following questions. Gentlemen, you are theologians ; men of leisure and learning ; mighty in the Scriptures. Some of you have grown grey in teaching the world ; most of you, I think, make no scruple of passing judgment, public and private, on my opinions and myself. It is therefore to be supposed that you have examined things at large and been curious in particulars ; have searched into the mysteries of things, deciding what is true, what false, what Christian and what not, and so have determined on a standard of doctrines, which is to you well known, accessible and acknowledged by all. Some of you can sling stones at a hair's breadth in the arena of Theology. You are many, and I am standing alone. Of course I shall take it for granted that you have, each and

all, thoroughly, carefully and profoundly examined the matters at issue between us ; that you have made up your minds thereon, and are all entirely agreed in your conclusions, and that, on all points ; for surely it were not charitable to suppose, without good and sufficient proof, that a body of Christian ministers, — conscientious men, learned and aware of the difficulties of the case, — would censure and virtually condemn one of their number for heresy, unless they had made personal investigation of the whole matter, had themselves agreed on their standard of Orthodoxy, and were quite ready to place that standard before the eyes of the whole people. I beg that this standard of Unitarian Orthodoxy, as it is agreed upon and established by the authority of the Boston Association, may be set before my eyes, and those of the public at the same time, and therefore, Gentlemen, I propose to you the following

## QUESTIONS.

CLASS I.—SCHOLASTIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN THEOLOGY.

1. What do you mean by the word *Salvation* ?
2. What do you mean by a *Miracle* ?
3. What do you mean by *Inspiration* ?
4. What do you mean by *Revelation* ?

CLASS II.—DOGMATIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO CERTAIN DOCTRINES OF THEOLOGY.

5. In questions of Theology, to what shall a man appeal, and what is the criterion whereby he is to test theological, moral, and religious doctrines ; are

there limits to theological inquiry, — and if so, what are those limits? is Truth to be accepted because it is true, and Right to be followed because it is right, or for some other reason?

6. What are the conditions of Salvation, both theoretical and practical, and how are they known?

7. What do you consider the essential doctrines of Christianity; what moral and religious truth is taught by Christianity, that was wholly unknown to the human race before the time of Christ? — and is there any doctrine of Christianity, that is not a part also of natural religion?

8. Do you believe all the books in the Bible, came from the persons to whom they are, in our common version thereof ascribed? — or what are genuine and canonical Scriptures?

9. Do you believe that all or any of the authors of the Old Testament were miraculously inspired, so that all or any of their language can properly be called the *Word of God*, and their writings constitute a miraculous revelation? or are those writings to be judged of, as other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth; in short, what is the authority of the Old Testament, and what relation does it bear to man, — that of Master or Servant?

10. Do you believe the law contained in the Pentateuch, in all parts and particulars, is miraculously inspired or revealed to man? — or is it, like the laws of Massachusetts, a human work, in whole or in part?

11. Do you believe the miracles related in the Old Testament, for example, that God appeared in a human form, spoke in human speech, walked in

the garden of Eden, eat and drank; that he commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac; and made the verbal declarations so often attributed to Him in the Old and New Testament; that Moses spoke with Him "as a man speaketh with his friend;" that the miracles alleged to have been wrought for the sake of the Hebrews in Egypt, the Red Sea, Arabia, and Palestine, and recorded in the Bible, were actual facts; that the birth of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel, was miraculous; that Balaam's ass spoke the Hebrew words put into his mouth; that God did miraculously give to Moses and others mentioned in the Old Testament, the commands there ascribed to him; that the sun stood still as related in the book of Joshua; that Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, and while within the fish, composed the ode ascribed to him; and do you believe all the miracles related in the books of Daniel, Job, and elsewhere, in the Old Testament?

12. Do you believe that any prophet of the Old Testament, solely through a miraculous revelation made to him by God, did distinctly and unequivocally foretell any distant and future event which has since come to pass, and in special that any prophet of the Old Testament, did thereby and in manner aforesaid, distinctly, and unequivocally, foretell the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, so that Jesus was, in the proper and exclusive sense of the word, the *Messiah* predicted by the prophets, and expected by the Jews?

13. What do you think is the meaning of the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," with its kindred expressions, in the Old Testament?



14 Do you believe that all or any of the authors of the New Testament were miraculously inspired, so that all or any of their language can properly be called the *Word of God*, and their writings constitute a miraculous revelation, or are those writings to be judged of as other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth; in short, what is the authority of the New Testament, and what relation does it bear to man—that of Master or Servant?

15. Do you believe the Christian Apostles were miraculously inspired to teach, write, or act, with such a *mode, kind, or degree* of inspiration as is not granted by God, in all time, to other men equally wise, moral, and pious; do you think the apostles were so informed by miraculous inspiration, as never to need the exercise of the common faculties of man, and never to fall into any errors of fact and doctrine, or are we to suppose that the apostles were mistaken in their announcement of the speedy destruction of the world, of the resurrection of the body, &c.?

16. What do you think is the nature of Jesus of Nazareth;—was he *God, man, or a being neither God nor man*, and how does he effect the salvation of mankind; in what sense is he the Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer?

17. Do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth was miraculously born, as it is related in two of the Gospels, with but one human parent; that he was tempted by the Devil, and transfigured, talking actually with Moses and Elias; that he actually transformed the substance of water into the substance of wine; fed five thousand men with five loaves and

two fishes ; that he walked on the waters ; miraculously stilled a tempest ; sent demons out of men into a herd of swine ; and that he restored to life persons wholly and entirely dead ?

18. Do you believe that Jesus had a miraculous and infallible inspiration—different in *kind* or *mode* from that granted to other wise, good, and pious men—informing him to such a degree that he never made a mistake in matters pertaining to Religion, to Theology, to Philosophy, or to any other department of human concern ; and that therefore he teaches with an authority superior to Reason, Conscience, and the Religious Sentiment in the individual man ?

19. Do you believe that it is impossible for God to create a being with the same moral and religious excellence that Jesus had, but also with more and greater intellectual and other faculties, and send him into the world as a man ; or has Jesus exhausted either or both the *capacity of Man*, or the *capability of God* ?

20. Do you believe that from a state of entire and perfect death, Jesus returned to a state of entire and perfect physical life ; that he did all the works, and uttered all the words attributed to him, in the concluding parts of the Gospels, after his resurrection, and was subsequently taken up into heaven, bodily and visibly, as mentioned in the book of Acts ?

21. Do you believe that at the death of Jesus, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent ; that darkness prevailed over the land for three hours ; that the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints that slept, arose and appeared to many ?

22. Do you believe that Jesus, or any of the writers of the New Testament, believed in, and taught the existence of a personal Devil, of angels good or bad, of demons who possessed the bodies of men ; and do you, yourselves, believe the existence of a personal Devil, of such angels and demons ; in special, do you believe that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary, and uttered exactly those words ascribed to him in the third Gospel ?

23. Do you believe that the writers of the four Gospels, and the book of Acts, never mingled mythical, poetical, or legendary matter in their compositions ; that they never made a mistake in a matter of fact ; and that they have, in all cases, reported the words and actions of Jesus, with entire and perfect accuracy ?

24. Do you believe the miracles related in the book of Acts,—for example, the miraculous inspiration of the apostles at Pentecost ; the cures effected by Peter, his vision, his miraculous deliverance from prison “by the angel of the Lord ;” the miraculous death of Ananias and Sapphira ; the miraculous conversion of Paul ; that diseased persons were cured by handkerchiefs and aprons brought to them from Paul ; and that he and Stephen actually, and with the bodies’ eye, saw Jesus Christ, an actual object exterior to themselves ?

25. Do you believe that Peter in the Acts, correctly explains certain passages of the Old Testament, as referring to Jesus of Nazareth, his sufferings, death, and resurrection ; that Jesus himself—if the Gospels truly represent his words—in all cases, applies the language of the Old Testament

to himself in its proper and legitimate meaning; was he never mistaken in this matter, or have the passages of the Old Testament many meanings?

26. Do you think that a belief in the miraculous inspiration of all or any of the writers of the Old Testament or New Testament; that a belief in all or any of the miracles therein mentioned; that a belief in the miraculous birth, life, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus; that a belief in his miraculous, universal, and infallible inspiration, is essential to a perfect Christian character, to salvation and acceptance with God, or even to participation in the Christian name? and if so, what doctrine of Morality or Religion really and necessarily rests, in whole or in part, on such a belief?

27. Do you believe that the two ordinances,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper,—are, in themselves, essential, necessary, and of primary importance as ends, valuable for their own sakes, or that they are but *helps* and *means* for the formation of the Christian character, and therefore valuable only so far as they help to form that character?

28. Do you think it wrong or unchristian in another, to abandon and expose what he deems a popular error, or to embrace and proclaim an unpopular truth; do you count yourselves, theoretically, to have attained all religious and theological truth, and to have retained no error in your own Creed, so that it is wholly unnecessary for you, on the one hand, to reëxamine your own opinions, or, on the other, to search further for Light and Truth, or do you think yourselves competent, without such search, or such examination, to pronounce a man



an infidel, and no Christian, solely because he believes many things in Theology which you reject, and rejects some things which you believe ?

Gentlemen, you have yourselves constrained me to write this letter. I write to you in this open way, for I wish that the public may understand your opinions as well as my own. I beg you will give your serious attention to the above questions, and return me a public answer, not circuitously, but in a straight-forward manly way, and at your earliest convenience. I have, at various times, as distinctly as possible, set forth my own views, and as you have publicly placed yourselves in a hostile attitude to me ; as some of you have done all in their power to disown me, and as they have done this, partly, on account of my alleged heresies, it is but due to yourselves to open the Gospel according to the Boston Association, give the public an opportunity to take the length and breadth of your standard of Unitarian Orthodoxy, and tell us all what you really think on the points above-mentioned. Then you and I shall know in what we differ ; there will be a clear field before us, and if we are doomed to contend, we shall not fight in the dark. I have invited your learned attention to matters on which it is supposed that you have inquired and made up your minds, and that you are entirely agreed among yourselves, and yet that you differ most widely from me. I have not, however, touched the great philosophical questions which lie at the bottom of all Theology, because I do not understand that you have yourselves raised these questions, or consciously and distinctly joined

issue upon them with me. Gentlemen, you are men of leisure, and I am busied with numerous cares ; you are safe in your multitude of council, while I have comparatively none to advise with. But notwithstanding these advantages, so eminently on your side, I have not feared to descend into the arena, and looking only for the truth, to write you this letter. I shall pause, impatient for your reply ; and, with hearty wishes for your continued prosperity, your increased usefulness, and growth alike in all Christian virtues, and every manly grace, I remain, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

THEODORE PARKER.

WEST ROXBURY, March 20th, 1845.

ANSWERS

TO QUESTIONS

CONTAINED IN

MR. PARKER'S LETTER

TO THE

BOSTON ASSOCIATION

OF

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS.

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BY

ONE NOT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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BOSTON:

WM. CROSBY & H. P. NICHOLS.

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## P R E F A C E .

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ALTHOUGH the Questions, to which imperfect answers are here attempted, were originally addressed to a particular body of individuals; yet by being, as they were, thrown openly before the Public — as it were, directed to it, instead of the persons for whom they were specially intended — they may fairly be considered, independently of the general interest felt in them, as *public property*. And as such, it is conceived that it is no impertinent interference for one, who is not in any way connected with that body, to offer for the instruction, or amusement, of any who may feel an interest in the matter, thoughts upon the subjects touched upon, which the writer received both pleasure and profit in putting upon paper as they occurred to his mind. They were, at first, written with no other view than to his own edification. It was afterwards thought that, as no other Answers had appeared, they might be acceptable to some minds, as hints or suggestions, if nothing more, to further reflection or inquiry, upon the important subjects of Religion and Theology, — upon which an interest had been awakened in the minds of the community, which it seemed a pity should be lost, without, at least, an attempt to improve it toward the clearing up of some of the doubts, or the removal of some of the rubbish, which still adheres to these universally interesting topics, marring their

effect, and hindering their beneficent influence. They do not make pretensions to being much more than sketches, or outlines, which a complete and full discussion of the various topics presented, might easily swell to volumes. The writer is entirely free from any *party* biases toward either side of the controversy which gave rise to these Questions; his only object having been, as nearly as possible, to discover and present the Truth—before which all parties should, with a reverent self-forgetfulness, bow; although its line may, as it usually does, run *across* all party lines of division.

The frequent use of the first person plural, as a convenient mode of expression, will not be misunderstood by any one, as involving any other than the writer himself,—and all who may chance to agree with him in opinion.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

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### CLASS I. — SCHOLASTIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF TERMS FREQUENTLY USED IN THEOLOGY.

*Question 1.* — What do you mean by the word *Salvation* ?

*Answer.* — By the word *Salvation*, in the Christian sense, is not intended salvation from error — though this might naturally be inferred by one who should read the history of Christianity, and observe the zeal which its professors and teachers have ever manifested for soundness — or what they regarded as such — of opinion ; and the immensely disproportionate interest they have bestowed upon the establishment of this, compared with virtue, purity, holiness — the Christian life and character.

Not from error, but from sin — from the power and dominion of evil, in any form — is Christian salvation. This, the words of Jesus, and his Apostles, wherever they touch upon the point, sufficiently prove. To have within us, implanted and firmly fixed, such principles, habits, and tastes for virtue and purity, such a love for the purer and better things of life, as shall render us secure against the danger of evil ever getting the upper hand within us, and ruling and running riot within the soul, and turning its chambers into a Pandemonium — this is what we would seek when we seek *Salvation* — to establish Reason and Conscience, truly instructed, in their rightful and legitimate dominion over the rest of the man. Our Saviour expressed the whole matter, in words of

the greatest simplicity and beauty, when he said of little children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" — into which man enters, when he becomes toward his Heavenly Parent, what these are to an earthly one — obedient, submissive, affectionately, but reverently, confiding; when the same innocence, purity, and simplicity, which characterize that guileless period of life, are in his heart — dispositions which the Apostle, when he commands us to be "*men* in understanding, but *children* in malice" declares to be consistent with all that maturity of mind, judgment, and of knowledge, which belongs to riper years.

Q. 2. — What do you mean by a *Miracle*?

A. — The word *Miracle*, is derived from a Latin verb, meaning, "to wonder." In its strict, primary, derivative signification, therefore, it means anything wonderful, astonishing, or out of the common way. In this broad sense, everything about us, as is sometimes said now-a-days — all the works and operations of nature — all the phenomena we witness around us, — are miracles. That is to say, they are all astonishing — wonderful — calculated to call forth admiration and awe — the more, as they are more deeply observed, comprehended, and pondered. And it is perfectly true that these, when fairly considered, are as much, or more, adapted to impress the mind with a sense of the Divine presence and power, as the more special and striking exercise of that power, in the cure of a sick, or the restoring to life of a dead, man. It is only because the former are not sufficiently considered and realized, that the latter would produce on ordinary minds a greater effect.

But this, although an allowable, is not the common and generally received use of the term. It is, as regards general usage, a metaphorical or figurative use of it. The word, in common parlance — especially when employed as a *theological term* — is now limited to the more narrow signification, of some occurrence which is a decided deviation from the common operations of nature — such as we know them to be — and such a deviation as necessarily to imply an immediate and extraordinary interposition of the Governing Power, to produce it. Speak to an ordinary man of a miracle, and he will understand by it some such an event as this; which, as



regards what we have learnt, from our observation and experience, to be the fixed laws according to which the operations of the natural world proceed, — which from their regularity and commonness, lose much of their just significance to the mass of mankind, — which, as regards these, is extraordinary — and so much so, as to be explicable only on the supposition of the special and designed intervention of the Hand which controls all. — If one does not intend this by the use of the word, he must explain himself if he would not be misunderstood.

Q. 3. — What do you mean by *Inspiration* ?

A. — The word *Inspiration*, means literally, an inbreathing, from the Latin verb *inspiro*. — As applied to a Poet, we understand by it, the infusion, or influx, into the mind, of those thoughts, sentiments, fancies, or feelings, which coming he knows not whence, nor how, force him to give them utterance, and to which he does give utterance, in the words, verses, and works, which delight and instruct mankind. — As applied to a Prophet, or Teacher, it is understood, in common use, to mean, the promptings of the Almighty, who, in what way we know not, but through that access, which, of necessity, he must always have to every human mind, pours into the mind and heart of him whom he may select as his agent for this purpose, the knowledge, instructions, warnings, or reproof, which he wishes to be communicated to His human offspring, or any portion of them, at any time. Whether He does not thus furnish many an agent to mankind, to whom He gives no outward token by which his commission may be certified — to himself, or to others — we have no means of determining, however probable or natural it might seem, until we know more, alike of the counsels of the Almighty Ruler, of the spiritual natures with which He has endowed us, and of the precise nature of the connection He may have seen fit to establish between Himself and his rational offspring. We know too little of the spiritual world, to be able to speak with any sort of certainty, on such a subject. — And this causes the necessity of some decided proof of the existence of special and immediate inspiration by the Deity, before we can believe in its existence, in any particular case, and give to its teachings the authority and value, which all would admit to be due

to whatever should come, well authenticated, from such a source. As to what would be a sufficient proof of this, to satisfy a reasonable skepticism, would be a matter, as to which different men may, and do, entertain very different opinions, according to the various natural constitution of their minds, or their acquired habits of thought and reasoning.

The only Inspiration in whose existence and certainty the Christian feels that he has any vital interest, is that of Jesus Christ himself — as to the truths which he taught, and the precepts he inculcated. He believes that he has here an instance of immediate inspiration from God, evidenced on proofs, alike infallible in the certainty they afford, and, in their variety, adapted to satisfy and convince, when fairly viewed, every class of thinkers — an inspiration whose purpose was, to give to man the Divine assurance for the truth of certain facts respecting his own condition and prospects, and the Divine character and purposes in regard to him — facts which it is absolutely essential should be known by him, to enable him to accomplish the ends of his present existence — and which his present powers are inadequate to give him a sufficient assurance of, in their ordinary operations. For any inspiration, beyond what is needful for the accomplishment of this purpose, whether in Jesus himself, or his Apostles; or for that of any of the individuals mentioned in the Old Testament, however the evidence for, or against it, might chance to affect his mind, to induce belief, he would not contend, as being of any further importance than any other facts — of science, history, or life — respecting which he might happen to feel, from any cause, interest or curiosity. About any other, *as a Christian*, he would feel no particular concern.

The questions and opinions that have arisen and been entertained upon this subject, and which have — falsely — been supposed to belong to, or to involve, Christianity itself, are numerous and various — some of them mournful monuments of man's ignorance, weakness, and superstition. — First, there is the portentous doctrine of the popular theology — that vast camel which has so long marched upright down the gaping popular throat, without sticking, either at hoof or hump, and which still finds a passage there, while many an innocent gnat excites a stifling choke — viz: that the whole Bible, verse by verse — word for word — from the first

verse of Genesis to the last in Revelations, is verbally inspired — that the Almighty, as it were, stood at the pen of each writer, and dictated each word ! What becomes of men's reason and common sense — and of their religion — under such incubuses as this, the history and present state of the church, but too clearly indicate. This may now, however, fairly be considered as exploded — as an absurdity.

Next in grossness, is the view of those who regard all the writers of both Old and New Testaments, without distinction, as directly inspired, in all the thoughts and sentiments they express, and the facts they record, but not in their language. This is beset with nearly the same difficulties and contradictions as the other.—Then there are those, who suppose them to have been *prompted to write* merely by inspiration — but left to themselves in what they should say — being only secured against gross error or mistake. Then there have been those, who draw distinctions between the different writers — between those of the Old Testament and those of the New, and between the different writers of the Old — supposing some to have been inspired, and others not ; or some more than others. Some believe Moses to have been specially inspired. Some, also, Samuel, and the Prophets — some or all of them. Others believe that neither Moses, nor Samuel, nor any of the prophets were so — nor any one else except Christ and Paul. Few of Liberal Christians — so called — now believe in the inspiration of the writers of the Old Testament *as to their writing* — any farther than in that of other writers of history, chronicle, philosophy or poetry ; and they estimate each class of writings, according to their just value in that department to which they severally belong. A larger number, probably, believe in the inspiration, in some sort, of the writers of the New Testament.

But all these questions relating to the subject, are, or ought to be, by all those who would be true to themselves as Christians, discussed, as other matters of historical, or literary, or philosophical science are discussed ; and not with that absorbing and exciting interest which would attach to any questions, in which were, *at all*, involved the existence, stability, or value, of that Faith which they cherish as containing the soul's dearest interests and hopes. It is from men's ignorance or oversight of this, that religious controver-

sies have ever been the bitterest that history has had to record, and that we see so much warmth and eager earnestness of zeal, manifested for what can only be regarded as of entirely minor importance, if it have anything whatever to do with Christianity. Hence have theologians discussed with as much interest, questions that relate to outward forms and ceremonies, as those which touch the essential truths of religion — those which concern a man's garb, as those which relate to his life and character. No true distinction is made between things really essential, and those entirely unessential.

Q. 4. — What do you mean by *Revelation*?

A. — By the word Revelation, is understood, the making known, or disclosing, of that which was before unknown. Hence, in a literal and very broad sense, all the knowledge we successively acquire is, as is sometimes said, a *revelation* to us, although it is a rather forced use of the word. Most of our knowledge comes to us through the aid of our senses, acting on the various objects of creation around us. Other objects of knowledge lie beyond the reach and cognisance of our present powers, in their present state. Among these, are the knowledge of the Creator, and his will, beyond a certain extent, and a knowledge of our own future destiny, after the grave, which here limits our view, has closed over our heads. Now, as it is of infinite importance to man, to be informed upon both of these subjects — indispensable, indeed, in order to make his life here what it was meant and ought to be, for his highest present and future well being and happiness — God, in his boundless wisdom and goodness, has seen fit, in compassion and kind regard to his children's imperfection, in such way and time as seemed best to Him, to make known to them — to *reveal* to them, in a manner different from their ordinary modes of acquiring knowledge, upon other subjects, the truth in respect to these matters. This Revelation was made through Jesus Christ, and the account of it is contained in the Gospels, as they are called, of the New Testament. Many, also, think that a similar revelation — though more limited in extent — was made through Moses; the account of which is to be found in some of the books of the Old Testament. To this latter sense of the word, viz: a special com-



munication of truth from God, — as opposed to all other modes of attaining it, — common usage has very much, if not exclusively, restricted its use. As a *theological term*, this is its only meaning. Hence the distinction between Reason and Revelation, as sources of knowledge — by the one being meant, the use of our natural powers only, by the other, these powers aided by Divine communications. Perhaps, in Christian theology the term ought to be confined to the signification of the revelation by Christ merely, since this is the only one which the Christian, as such, necessarily acknowledges.

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## CLASS II. — DOGMATIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO CERTAIN DOCTRINES OF THEOLOGY.

**Q. 5.** — In questions of Theology, to what shall a man appeal, and what is the criterion whereby he is to test theological, moral, and religious doctrines; are there limits to theological inquiry, — and if so, what are those limits? is Truth to be accepted because it is true, and Right to be followed because it is right, or for some other reason?

**A.** — We do not conceive that there are any other limits to Theological inquiry — any more than to inquiry on any other topic — than those of the boundaries of Truth, which the Creator himself has placed across our path. The criterion, by which the truth of theological, moral, or religious doctrines is to be tested, is the Scriptures, so far as they deal with them, and so far as they do so with authority from above, interpreted by Reason, assisted by all the light that can be drawn from any other sources, from researches into the arcana of Nature, or the deductions of observation and experience, and knowledge — in short, aided by whatever may afford direction and guidance. And Truth, when found to be such, is undoubtedly to be accepted because True — and Right, under the same circumstances, to be followed because it is Right.

**Q. 6.** — What are the conditions of Salvation, both theoretical and practical, and how are they known?

**A.** — By Salvation, as above explained, we understand the establishment of principles, tastes, and habits of Virtue, interpreting that term in its widest and most liberal sense — as it is found described in the New Testament, from the lips of Christ, the sincere and

strenuous effort to attain to which, procures us acceptance in the sight of God. Its conditions are those of the attainment of such a virtue, and no other. Whatever, whether of belief or practice, is essential to this, is essential to Salvation. They are to be known by observation and experience—that of ourselves and of others.

**Q. 7.**—What do you consider the essential doctrines of Christianity; what moral and religious truth is taught by Christianity, that was wholly unknown to the human race before the time of Christ?—and is there any doctrine of Christianity, that is not a part also of natural religion?

**A.**—The essential doctrines of Christianity are those of the Immortality of the Soul—and the Paternal character of God—with whatever else may necessarily follow from them; among which necessary consequents, is that true and perfect life which it teaches, and which, however obligatory, would never be widely prevalent, except in connection with these truths. The truth of the New Testament narratives, and of the miracles wrought by Christ, as there related, are likewise essential parts of it, just so far as they are essential to the establishment of, and as a foundation for, the others.

These had been thought and reasoned about, and taught, by Grecian and other philosophers, before the coming of Jesus Christ. The chief and essential difference between his teaching and theirs, is, that his was given as from God, with the authority of his seal to its truth; while theirs was on no authority but their own; and, of course, their teaching was limited and confined, and little powerful in its effects; while his has already converted the best part of the world nominally; and is in progress of doing so really; as well as of bringing under its control, the remaining portions, over which Paganism, or the teachings of Mahomet still hold an usurped sway.

There is one sense of the term Natural Religion, in which it includes all that Christianity teaches us in relation to the subject, since it is synonymous with all religion. The relations in which we stand to God, out of which grows what we call religion, were always the same—and, therefore, all true religion is, strictly speaking, natural—since it is, what it was originally designed by the Creator, in the course of Nature, to be. He was always the Father of mankind, as much so, before they were clearly informed

of it, as after. He always designed man for an immortal existence ; as much before, as after that, in the course of His providence, He thought it best clearly to inform him of it. The relations in which he has stood to his Maker, have, therefore, always been the same, although from his ignorance of them, as well as other causes, he has not always conformed himself to them. Therefore, true religion has always been the same — growing out of the natural, original relation which subsists, and has always subsisted, between the Creator and his rational creatures. In this sense, Natural Religion includes all religion ; and this, we presume, is the sense in which Mr. P. uses the term here and elsewhere, as well as the term Absolute Religion, — an use which though perfectly allowable, and perhaps, the most strictly true, yet must be known by him to be different from the commonly received one. The general understanding of the term Natural Religion — is of those doctrines, or that part, of Religion, which the reason, or natural powers of man, are able to discover, by their own unaided operations, without the need of any higher teachings. Thus Natural Religion, in common use, is distinguished from Revealed Religion, as it is called, or those doctrines or truths of Religion, which have been expressly revealed or disclosed by the direct interposition, or teaching, of the object of all religion Himself. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that much misunderstanding should have ensued between the parties to this controversy, from their unexplained difference in the understanding of these words, *Natural Religion*. It is the same thing, that has been the fruitful source of so many protracted controversies and harsh debates, both in the history of theological, and of all other, opinions. Here, probably, as in most such discussions, could each party fully understand the other, there would be found to be less discrepancy in real opinions — in things — than there appears, at first, to be, in words. In theological discussions — more than any others — it is absolutely indispensable, that the two parties should use the *same terms* in the *same senses* — or, at least, that each should know, and make a fair account of, the meaning which the other chooses, from whatever cause, to affix to any words, or terms.

Q. 8. — Do you believe all the books in the Bible came from the

persons to whom they are, in our common version thereof, ascribed? — or what are genuine and canonical Scriptures?

A. — The belief, or the disbelief of anything whatever in respect to the books of the Old Testament, is a matter of no importance at all to the Christian, as such. He has the whole of his religion in the New Testament, and, as such, there only. This contains all, and more, of doctrine and duty, than is to be found in the Old. The majority of the first Christians out of Judea, knew nothing about the Old Testament — nor, for a long time, had they the *books* of the New, in their present shape; and no doctrine is more labored by the Apostle Paul, than that of the entire freedom of the disciples of Christ from any sort of allegiance to the laws of Moses, or of the Old Testament dispensation, which he declared to be entirely superseded by the purer and more complete system of his Master. Of course, therefore, each one will think as he likes — or will not think, at all — respecting the genuineness or truth of one, or all, of the books of the Old Testament. The only genuine and canonical *Christian* Scriptures, are those of the New Testament, — excepting, perhaps, one or two of the last of the books in it.

Q. 9. — Do you believe that all or any of the authors of the Old Testament were miraculously inspired, so that all or any of their language can properly be called the *Word of God*, and their writings constitute a miraculous revelation? or are those writings to be judged of, as other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth; in short, what is the authority of the Old Testament, and what relation does it bear to man, — that of Master or Servant?

A. — The answer to this follows obviously and plainly from that given to the last. From that, it evidently is to be inferred, that the writings of the Old Testament “*are* to be judged of, like all other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth.” In short, their authority, if they have any, is, if the use of those words is understood, that of Servant, not Master, to man. Some, probably, believe them to contain the account of a miraculous interposition in behalf of the Jewish people, and a proclamation of Divine laws, on the Divine authority — and some do not, according as the evidence for the genuineness, authenticity, and value of the several books, as true accounts, operates differently upon different minds — all which evidence may be found by those who take an interest in the inquiry, in its proper place — in books upon the subject.



**Q. 10.** — Do you believe the law contained in the Pentateuch, in all parts and particulars, is miraculously inspired or revealed to man? — or is it, like the laws of Massachusetts, a human work, in whole or in part?

**A.** — There are many among Liberal Christians, who believe the laws given in the Pentateuch to have been, *substantially*, by the direct inspiration of God. Others, probably, suppose them to have been so in part only — in part, likewise, deduced by human reason and a far-reaching foresight, acting with a wise regard to all the circumstances and interests of the people, for whose benefit they were promulgated. Probably, too, there are some, who think that there is very little authority for believing them to be a very correct account of what was enjoined by Moses at all, by any agency or authority — if, indeed, they suppose such a person ever existed, as he is there represented to be. Although it is not easy to see that the evidence for the substantial truth of much of the Old Testament history, could have been, under all circumstances, very much stronger than it now is.

**Q. 11.** — Do you believe the miracles related in the Old Testament, for example, that God appeared in a human form, spoke in human speech, walked in the garden of Eden, eat and drank; that he commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac; and made the verbal declarations so often attributed to Him in the Old Testament; that Moses spoke with Him “as a man speaketh with his friend;” that the miracles alleged to have been wrought for the sake of the Hebrews in Egypt, the Red Sea, Arabia, and Palestine, and recorded in the Bible, were actual facts; that the birth of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel, was miraculous; that Balaam’s ass spoke the Hebrew words put into his mouth; that God did miraculously give to Moses and others mentioned in the Old Testament, the commands there ascribed to him; that the sun stood still as related in the book of Joshua; that Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, and while within the fish, composed the ode ascribed to him; and do you believe all the miracles related in the books of Daniel, Job, and elsewhere, in the Old Testament?

**A.** — To answer in detail all the queries put in this Question, and to discuss, in the manner it should be done — if done, at all — the various points they necessarily bring into view, would occupy a space which it is far beyond the limits of the present design to afford. A volume might easily be written upon them. Leaving this for some other occasion, it will suffice, for the present, to say that most persons would make a very wide distinction between the miracles — most, if not all, of them — alleged to have been performed in behalf of the Hebrew people, during their sojourn in

Egypt, and their passage from thence to Palestine — and all others recorded in the Old Testament. In addition to other considerations, we have in the case of these, that which is more wanting in that of the others, and which is an essential pre-requisite to the acceptance of the evidence for any miracle, viz: an adequate motive or purpose, to induce the intervention of the Supreme Power in this manner. This motive we have in the necessity there was, of separating and isolating from the then wretchedly corrupt world, some portion of it, which might be prepared to be the recipients and heralds to the world, of that Truth, which it was the Divine purpose to communicate through Christ; and which, if communicated at an earlier period, or to a nation not in the state of previous preparation, in respect to religious knowledge, that the Jews were in, would have probably been lost, or, at least, not have answered its destined end.

As to most others beside these, where they cannot be accounted for, as accounts growing out of Oriental hyperbole or exaggeration — or Oriental forms of speech, it is more easy to account for their interpolation, as there is less reason to believe it possible or probable that they were actual occurrences. On all these questions, however, there would probably be found every varying shade of opinion.

Q. 12. — Do you believe that any prophet of the Old Testament, solely through a miraculous revelation made to him by God, did distinctly and unequivocally foretell any distant and future event which has since come to pass, and in special that any prophet of the Old Testament, did thereby and in manner aforesaid, distinctly, and unequivocally, foretell the birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, so that Jesus was, in the proper and exclusive sense of the word, the *Messiah* predicted by the prophets, and expected by the Jews?

A. — There is, perhaps, no point on which a greater diversity — a more infinite variety of shades — of opinion would be found to exist, than on the many and perplexing questions which relate to Prophecy. Very many have no settled and well defined views upon the subject.

Most, however, would be willing to admit as much as this — that it was taught by those called prophets and other individuals mentioned in the Old Testament history — and indeed, had become the general expectation of the Jewish people, — that a very distin-

guished personage was to appear in their nation, at some future time, who was to be a great honor to their nation, and blessing to themselves and the world. This individual, as to whose exact character very vague and various ideas were entertained, was termed the Messiah. This expectation is a prominent fact in Jewish history, and stands out in it with unmistakable distinctness. It can hardly be doubted either, on a candid view of the premises, that Jesus was the person thus blindly designated. He evidently regarded himself as such. Although that he, also, extremely disappointed the popular expectation, is very clear — being an entirely different person in his character, life, and actions, from that which was looked for by most, if not all, of his countrymen. He, thus at the same time, fulfilled and disappointed the Messianic hopes. He fulfilled the expectations that should have been entertained, though he disappointed those which really were entertained. He was the true Messiah — although, for not being the false Messiah that was determinedly looked for, he was put to death by the disappointed and exasperated populace.

The value of Prophecy as an evidence of the truth of Christianity, has been very much overrated in many quarters. To say nothing of its great uncertainty, it is, at best, superfluous; the Christian revelation, resting on evidence — independent of this — amply sufficient to sustain it, as it has done hitherto, without pressing into its service a force which, from its weakness, may rather serve to invite attack; and by its discomfiture or disorder, often to give an appearance of a temporary defeat.

**Q. 13.** — What do you think is the meaning of the phrase, "Thus saith the Lord," with its kindred expressions, in the Old Testament?

**A.** — This phrase occurs most frequently in the writings of the Prophets, by whom it is employed as a most impressive form of speech, by which to give additional force and authority to the utterance of that which they might believe to be, on whatever grounds — or which they might wish to have believed to be — the will, or the thoughts, of God. Every one will acknowledge the effect which it produces, in giving a solemnity and majesty, not easily otherwise attainable, to their warnings, exhortations, denunciations, or rebukes. There is no reason why a preacher now, should not make

use of the same form of speech — except that the effect of it upon an enlightened audience of the present day, would not be what it must have been to the rude multitude which, with mingled awe, fear, and astonishment, would gather around, and hang upon the lips of an Isaiah, or Jeremiah.

**Q. 14.** — Do you believe that all or any of the authors of the New Testament were miraculously inspired, so that all or any of their language can properly be called the *Word of God*, and their writings constitute a miraculous revelation, or are those writings to be judged of as other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth? in short, what is the authority of the New Testament, and what relation does it bear to man — that of Master or Servant?

**A.** — Undoubtedly, the books of the New Testament “are to be judged of as other writings, by their own merits, and so are to pass for what they are worth.” Who, at least, of liberal Christians, ever says the contrary? And we are astonished that any one at all conversant with their writings, should have thought it necessary to ask the question — for the sake of *information*. It is not contended by any, except those who hold to the old-fashioned, but long since fairly exploded, doctrines of the popular theology, that the New Testament writings *constitute*, but merely that they *contain the account of*, a miraculous revelation; and that they are the *word of God*, no farther than as they contain a true record of the words of those who spoke from God, under the authority of his express commission so to do. The only *word of God* here, is the teachings of Christ — and of Paul, so far as he spoke not on his own account; and so of the other Apostles. No one supposes the writers of these books to have been verbally inspired — nor, however they may have been inspired for other purposes, that they were so at all for this, any farther than, at the most, to secure their memories from deceiving them, in the recollection of the incidents which they record. Those who suppose them to have been thus far inspired, compose one class of thinkers on this subject; while there is another large class, who think that no inspiration is needful, to enable men to give a substantially true and accurate account of events, of which they were eye-witnesses, some twenty or thirty years previously; which then made the deepest impression on their minds; which afterwards changed and controlled the whole course of their lives, thoughts, and characters; and which had been



made, ever since, the subject of constant, probably daily and hourly, conversation, teaching, and reflection. Not believing it to be beyond the bounds of possibility, or even the strongest probability, — nay! believing it the most natural thing in the world, — that such persons should, under such circumstances, retain a most vivid, and even minutely accurate, remembrance of events and words, which had thus woven themselves into the whole web and texture of their lives and thoughts — a belief confirmed by every day's experience, in the case of persons remembering, for a longer time, far less striking and important occurrences. Believing thus, they think it entirely unnecessary, and that therefore, there are no grounds, to suppose any such inspiration to have taken place. They have all they want without it. And as there is nowhere any express account of such an inspiration, but only a belief, growing out of a sense of its necessity or value; and as they believe the amount of miraculous interposition of the Supreme to be limited by its absolute needfulness for the accomplishment of his purposes, they do not wish to burden their faith with what they deem an useless incumbrance. With these, therefore, the accounts of the life of Christ and the Apostles, rest on the same ground as do those of the events related in the histories of Thucydides or Xenophon, or any Greek or Roman historian — so far as these historians obtained the materials for their narrations in the same mode as did the New Testament writers. They believe that honest men wrote accounts of things which they had seen and heard, and been deeply impressed and affected by — and that we have those accounts substantially as they came from their hands. As the evidence for their genuineness and authenticity rests on precisely the same grounds as does that of the great works of the Greek and Roman historians, with the exception of the weight of evidence in their favor, being vastly greater than in the case of the latter — so they would put their authority on the same ground, the balance being as much or more in their favor in this, as in the other case. And they would rest on it with unlimited and unhesitating confidence; and would demand, as a matter of consistency, from him who would give up the substantial truth of the New Testament records, that he should likewise refuse his faith to all ancient history. And they can hardly see why all modern history should not likewise be

a blank to him ; why he should not be a skeptic of all events which have not passed under his own ocular observation.

They challenge examination of the evidences, and would be willing to rest their case in the hands of any honest lawyer, competent to array the facts, and to state the argument in its full force — confident that any unprejudiced jury of candid and intelligent men, would not find it necessary to leave their seats, before rendering a verdict in their favor.

Q. 15. — Do you believe the Christian Apostles were miraculously inspired to teach, write, or act, with such a *mode, kind, or degree* of inspiration as is not granted by God, in all time, to other men equally wise, moral, and pious ; do you think the apostles were so informed by miraculous inspiration, as never to need the exercise of the common faculties of man, and never to fall into any errors of fact and doctrine ; or are we to suppose that the apostles were mistaken in their announcement of the speedy destruction of the world, of the resurrection of the body, &c. ?

A. — In regard to the kind, or mode, of the inspiration of the Apostles, the same may be said, as is said in respect to that of their Master, in Answer 18. In both cases, as we suppose their inspiration was given to them for the accomplishment of a particular purpose, and for that only, its degree would undoubtedly be limited to what was needful for that. There is no sort of necessity for believing it to have superseded the ordinary use of the faculties ; nor have we any reason to suppose it would secure them against errors of fact, or speculation, or doctrine, in matters unessential to the great end for which it was all given — among which matters may be included whatever they may have chanced to think respecting “the speedy destruction of the world,” and the “resurrection of the body.” With respect to the acts and words of most of the Apostles, subsequent to their Master’s death, we know too little to be able to form a very correct judgment respecting the amount of their inspiration — or want of it. As to some of them, — Paul, if not John and Peter, in particular, — if the New Testament records are good for anything, it is impossible not to suppose them to have had an inspiration superior in degree, if not different in kind, from that of ordinary men — their equals in point of piety and morality.

Q. 16. — What do you think is the nature of Jesus of Nazareth ; — was he *God, man, or a being neither God nor man*, and how does he effect

the salvation of mankind ; in what sense is he the Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer ?

A. — The Unitarians, as their very name imports, do not believe Jesus to have been God. Many believe him to have been of an higher order of beings than man. While many, also, believe him to have been simply a man — with character formed, as the characters of other men are, by a successive victory over the various evil propensities and passions of the lower nature, and a more entire conformity to those laws of the Great Parent, and a more diligent use of those means of virtue, which all may know, and all may use, as he did, if they will ; but which from various causes other men neglect. Whether the same character might not be formed now, by the use of the same means, supposing the same means to be within the reach of all, is a question that yet remains to be decided. He effects the salvation of mankind, by the power which the Truth that he taught, in the motives and aid which it furnishes, gives to men over the assaults of evil, — the temptations of their outer life, and the passions and propensities of their lower natures.

He is man's Saviour, Mediator, Redeemer, in the sense of being the medium, through which God has communicated to man that which, if rightly used by him, will infallibly, and in all cases whatever, save and redeem him from the dominion of sin and evil in every shape — and their consequent misery.

Thus it is that, by the grace of God, which induced Him to make this so much needed communication, we are saved, through faith in Christ — that is, through the belief of the great truths which he taught, in their natural and inevitable influence upon our minds, and wills, and lives. So simple a matter is this great doctrine of "Salvation by faith," about which so many folios have been written, fierce words spoken, persecutions and martyrdoms endured. Man is saved, by a belief in his true condition here, and his prospects hereafter ; which condition and prospects are taught him, with the infallible certainty of the Divine assertion, by Jesus Christ. In order to confer this vast and inestimable benefit upon his race, he endured a life of privation and of toil, and suffered a death of torment and disgrace ; whose disgrace we may approach the realization of, by comparing it with the death of the criminal on the gal-

lows — whose torment — the mind shrinks from the effort to realize to itself. For this every individual of the race owes him a personal debt of gratitude; a debt, whose amount can only be estimated by a comparison of his present condition with what it would have been, had the veil which was then lifted, alike from the present and the future, remained closed, during the eighteen centuries which have since elapsed — and which can only be discharged in the way he himself pointed out, as that in which his friends might best manifest their love for him — by doing the things which he commanded, and living the life which he exemplified. He who neglects this, is not merely faithless to himself — but to his best friend and greatest benefactor. Ingratitude — of the deepest dye, is added to the catalogue of his transgressions. Such is the relation, we sustain, *as men* — all of us — to Jesus.

Q. 17. — Do you believe that Jesus of Nazareth was miraculously born, as it is related in two of the Gospels, with but one human parent; that he was tempted by the Devil, and transfigured, talking actually with Moses and Elias; that he actually transformed the substance of water into the substance of wine; fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes; that he walked on the waters; miraculously stilled a tempest; sent demons out of men into a herd of swine; and that he restored to life persons wholly and entirely dead?

A. — We cannot disbelieve these, without disbelieving all the rest of the New Testament — including everything relating to Jesus — nor can we do this, without disbelieving all the other facts of ancient history — nay, of modern too, and it is not easy to see why not of everything, not coming under the cognisance of our own senses — all testimony being equally fallible with that on which these facts rest. It would be as easy to believe in a history of Rome, without its wars — a life of Cæsar, rejecting the accounts of his battles — as to believe the life of Jesus, without accepting the great mass of the miraculous narratives interwoven with the story. And, as we cannot do this, and as we find no difficulty whatever in giving our assent to these stories; but, on the contrary, think their truth the only possible or satisfactory mode of accounting for the existence of other facts, of which even our own senses apprize us, therefore, we do, with undoubting confidence, believe them. We would except, however, from this unqualified assent three of the clauses of the Question.



The accounts of the miraculous birth of Jesus, rest on different and inferior grounds of faith from the rest of the narratives, of which they form a part. The evidence for the genuineness of the portions of the Gospels containing them, is much less than that for the rest. And supposing them to be genuine, the facts related do not rest, as the others purport to, on the evidence of the ocular observation of the relator, or of him from whom the relator received his information ; but took place many years previously, during which interval there is more room for fiction, or fable, to have become mingled with the truth, than in the case of the others. There are many, however, who believe them ; and supposing the mother of Jesus to have been living, and able to testify as to the matter, after the crucifixion, there are no small grounds for such a faith. As this, however, would not necessarily prove Christ to have been anything more than a man, it is a matter of no great importance.

With respect to the ‘Temptation by the Devil,’ not believing in the real and personal existence of any such individual as this, the most rational mode of regarding the account is, as a mere figurative representation of what went on in the mind of Jesus. The temptations of ambition, of vanity, and of sense, passed through his mind, as they do through the minds of men, now-a-days ; with this difference only, that they were, in his case, as they are not always in our own, entirely and totally repelled. Whether this represented a struggle going on in his mind for years, during the gradual formation of that character, which afterwards shone forth with such lustre ; or whether it took place in the course of a few days, we cannot determine with certainty. The evidence of the record favors the latter supposition. Our own views of the character of Christ, would lead us more to the former.

As to the sending of a demon into the swine, some may suppose it to have been a miraculous occurrence — that the derangement, or mental disorder, which was removed, by the command of Jesus, from the man, was transferred to the swine, and produced their catastrophe. Others suppose, as there is no difficulty in doing, that from some cause or other, a panic may have seized the swinish multitude, as all who have observed these, or other animals, when collected in large numbers, know to be no uncommon occurrence, — and have urged them, one pressing upon another, in the blind-

ness of their fear, over the brink of the precipice, which proved their destruction. There is no improbability in supposing, that some mad freak of the individual called a demoniac, may have caused the original impulse; which, taken in connection with the removal of his disorder, and with the ideas popularly entertained among the Jews, respecting demons, it is easy to see might have been ascribed by the bystanders to the act of Jesus, in transferring from the man to the brutes the evil spirit, supposed to have taken up a residence in the former. It is probable that the disciples of Jesus, were no wiser nor less superstitious, on these subjects, than were the multitude, from whose ranks they had been selected, with all their previous prejudices and ideas still adhering to them. This last explanation would remove the objection which some have entertained against this miracle, on account of its seeming to be opposed to the general benevolence, and regard for the interests of all, which, at other times, characterised the conduct of Jesus. Those, to whom this is not a satisfactory explanation, must accept the miraculous one, since there are no grounds for throwing the account out of the record; and where that is the case, it must be either believed as it stands, or some rational mode of explaining it, must be offered.

Q. 18. — Do you believe that Jesus had a miraculous and infallible inspiration — different in *kind* or *mode* from that granted to other wise, good, and pious men — informing him to such a degree that he never made a mistake in matters pertaining to Religion, to Theology, to Philosophy, or to any other department of human concern; and that therefore he teaches with an authority superior to Reason, Conscience, and the Religious Sentiment in the individual man?

A. — How far the Inspiration of Jesus was different in *kind* or *mode* from that which has been vouchsafed to other great and good men, it is impossible for us to tell. We know so little of inspiration, as to anything but what we call its *effects*, that we cannot judge at all — with any tolerable degree of certainty — of anything beside this, respecting it; his Inspiration may have been the same in kind with that of Homer or Milton — different only in degree or purpose — or it may not. He only knows, who gave to each the powers, whose effects we feel and enjoy.

Whether he be regarded as infallible, in respect to anything but that Truth, which it was the purpose of his mission to teach to

exemplify, and to apply, is a question, rather of curiosity than of any practical importance. It is enough that we have in his teachings, the Divine authority for the certainty of man's future eternal existence, as well as for the true character of his Creator, and of his will in respect to his human offspring. From these few truths, taken in connection with the other circumstance of man's situation here, all the precepts and rules of life, which fell from the lips of Christ, are legitimate and obvious deductions. Give us the Truth, and the Life follows as a matter of course. And it was for the sake of the latter that the former was proclaimed. Thus was he "the Way, the Truth and the Life." He proclaimed, and certified that Truth, from which, as a necessary consequence, that Life follows which is the Way in which man should tread, in order to find his highest good, both in the present scene of his existence, and in those which are to follow. It will be time enough to discuss the question of his authority, as compared with that of Reason and Conscience, when it shall be shown that the instructions of the two, fairly understood, in any way, conflict.

Q. 19. — Do you believe that it is impossible for God to create a being with the same moral and religious excellence that Jesus had, but also with more and greater intellectual and other faculties, and send him into the world as a man; or has Jesus exhausted either or both the *capacity of Man*, or the *capability of God*?

A. — All things are possible to God. When, however, we see such a person as that described in this Question, we shall certainly believe — not in the possibility, but in the probability of such an event taking place, with a much stronger faith than we do, at present. The question is one of mere curiosity only, and seems to be neither here nor there in the present discussion.

Q. 20. — Do you believe that from a state of entire and perfect death, Jesus returned to a state of entire and perfect physical life; that he did all the works, and uttered all the words attributed to him, in the concluding parts of the Gospels, after his resurrection, and was subsequently taken up into heaven, bodily and visibly, as mentioned in the book of Acts?

A. — As to his having been taken up, "bodily or visibly," it is impossible to decide with certainty. That he disappeared from the assembled disciples *in a cloud*, is what the history tells us; — an account which is consistent with any mode of disappearance from

their presence ; — which simple fact alone is all that we have any sufficient ground for believing in. We can trace him no farther than to the end of his last interview with them.

Of the truth of the accounts of this interview, as well as of the other facts noticed in this Question, there is no more reason to doubt, than in regard to those mentioned in Question 17, to the answer to which, the reader is referred.

Q. 21. — Do you believe that at the death of Jesus, the earth quaked, the rocks were rent ; that darkness prevailed over the land for three hours ; that the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints that slept, arose and appeared to many ?

A. — There are two modes of explaining the earthquake, &c., related to have taken place at the time of the crucifixion, without disparaging, in any way, the account of them as actual events. One is, to suppose them to have been miraculous — consummating by one stupendous and awful exhibition the long series of exertions of Divine power, which had marked the course of that life, which was now drawing to a close. Another is, by supposing that, just at that time, a natural earthquake took place, accompanied with an enveloping cloud of darkness. By this the rocks might be rent asunder, and the stones be rolled from the entrances of the tombs, which they were employed to close. That this may have been the case, there is a bare possibility ; although on a calculation of chances, any one will see, that the balance of *probabilities* is vastly against the occurrence of so extraordinary an event, just at that time, just in that place.

As to the appearance of visions, &c., fewer would find it necessary to resort to the miraculous explanation of them. It would be strange, indeed, if, at such a time — when men's minds and imaginations, and passions, were wrought up to such a state of high-strung excitement — in the midst of all the marvels and prodigies that had attended the life, and death, and reappearance, of Jesus, reports of apparitions, and of strange sights and visions, should not have become rife in the midst of an ignorant, superstitious, and intensely excited populace ; which reports and rumors might be alluded to in the loose and indefinite way in which they are by the New Testament writers.



**Q. 22.**—Do you believe that Jesus, or any of the writers of the New Testament, believed in, and taught the existence of a personal Devil, of angels good or bad, of demons who possessed the bodies of men; and do you, yourselves, believe the existence of a personal Devil, of such angels and demons; in special, do you believe that the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, and to the Virgin Mary, and uttered exactly those words ascribed to him in the third Gospel?

**A.**—It is not imagined that there are many educated and liberal Christians, who believe in the existence of any other devil, than that of the personification of *evil*, under every shape. There is no authority in the Scriptures for such a belief; and it is more consonant to our reason and other knowledge—as well as far more agreeable to the imagination—to suppose that, if any other spirit or spirits are about us, than the Great and Good Spirit that prevades all space, it is far more likely that they are some, of a character and disposition similar to, and congenial with his own, than that they are dark and malignant demons, who, according to a dismal superstition which still broods, as an incubus, over many parts of our land, are ever hovering about this fair earth, the enemies of man,—“seeking whom they may devour.”

Probably, specimens of most of those whom we read of in the New Testament, as being possessed of demons, might be found in our insane, or other hospitals. Although there is every reason to believe that the Apostles,—the most, if not all, of them,—but not Jesus, entertained the belief, which was common in their nation and time, that the many mental disorders, which we consign to an asylum to be cured, or alleviated, by proper treatment, were owing to some evil spirit, which, for a season, had taken possession of the man.

As to the existence of angels, we see no reason why there should not be spirits in existence, whom God, for aught we know, may make use of as his messengers, or for other purposes. We can clearly know nothing about it, until made more conversant with the spiritual world than we are, at present. The existence or mission of such, does not rest on the authority of the New Testament revelation, the only one to which Christians are bound by their faith,—that portion of the Gospel narrative, containing the account of the appearance of the angel to Mary and Zacharias, being now acknowledged by many of the best theologians, to rest on a basis of

inferior authority to that of the rest of the narrative, of which it forms a part. It is a question, however, of curiosity merely, and of no practical importance. The reason, imagination, or fancy, of each individual, will deal with it as he may like.

**Q. 23.** — Do you believe that the writers of the four Gospels, and the book of Acts, never mingled mythical, poetical or legendary matter in their compositions; that they never made a mistake in a matter of fact; and that they have, in all cases, reported the words and actions of Jesus, with entire and perfect accuracy?

**A.** — The views which each individual entertains as to the degree of Inspiration of the writers of the New Testament, would modify very materially his views as to this matter. Those who believe them to have been inspired to the degree of insuring them from mistake, of fact or memory, will answer the question, without qualification, in the affirmative. Those, on the contrary, whose views of inspiration do not go so far as this, would hesitate longer. Those who believe them merely to have related, as other historians or biographers relate, events which had passed before their own eyes, — or those of others from whom they had received the account, — with no other aids but their natural powers of reasoning and memory, deepened by the vital interest felt in the facts, and the strong impression they must have originally made upon them, — an impression kept vivid by having been a constant subject of reflection, interest, conversation, and instruction through life, — lived for, suffered for, and in the constant danger of being died for, — those who entertain this view, will, of course, have opened to their minds the question, how far the defects of the relator's memory, his ignorance, his natural and hereditary prejudices and feelings, or any of the circumstances connected with him, or his account, will modify or affect the truth of the relations given by him.

Those who believe in the necessity, the possibility and the probability of God's interfering in a miraculous manner, understanding the word miracle in the sense before explained, for the instruction and guidance of his children, will find no reason to believe any of the accounts, with the exception it may be, of those in the first chapters of Matthew and Luke, to be either mythical or legendary. With his views, all the accounts which have been so stigmatized,

the only objection to the reception of which, more than of the other facts in connection with which they are found, being in themselves, will be the most natural, simple, and probable occurrences. His only astonishment may be that they are the only well authenticated ones of a similar kind, to be found in the world's history. As to there being much of the poetical style in the narratives, — in the manner, if not the matter, — there is no question about it. They could hardly have been written where they were without it. Our Saviour's style of speech is one of the most highly poetical to be found on record. Much of what he said, in its form, and spirit, is the truest and loftiest poetry.

Q. 24. — Do you believe the miracles related in the book of Acts, — for example, the miraculous inspiration of the apostles at Pentecost; the cures effected by Peter, his vision, his miraculous deliverance from prison "by the angel of the Lord;" the miraculous death of Ananias and Sapphira; the miraculous conversion of Paul; that diseased persons were cured by handkerchiefs and aprons brought to them from Paul; and that he and Stephen actually, and with the bodies' eye, saw Jesus Christ, an actual object exterior to themselves?

A. — The history recorded in the Acts, we have the same authority for believing to be true history, *substantially*, as for that of the several Gospels. The believer in miracles, at all, supposing a sufficient object for them, will find no difficulty in believing them to have been performed in aid of the propagation of that Truth, for the first promulgation and establishment of which they were found necessary, and were employed; and except so far as the events spoken of in this question, may be explained by natural means, and so far as their historical authority, in each case, remains unimpugned, he will hardly refuse them credence. Except in so far, however, as a disbelief of these, one or all, would involve necessarily a disbelief of the other narratives, the Christian believer may think as he likes in regard to them, without being any the less a Christian believer. These latter contain in themselves all the essentials of Christian faith, both as to itself, and as to its foundations. We cannot help thinking, however, that upon him who can believe in the establishment, the propagation, the spread, and the acknowledged effects of Christianity, or even in the existence of Jesus himself, without a belief in the miraculous facts connected with these events, as many of them as are related, or as he can infer,

lies, if upon any one, the charge of credulity, or an over-easy faith. To many, to believe not merely the well authenticated miracles of the New Testament, but those of the Talmud, and the Catholic Church besides, might be the easier thing of the two.

Q. 25. — Do you believe that Peter, in the Acts, correctly explains certain passages of the Old Testament, as referring to Jesus of Nazareth, his sufferings, death and resurrection; that Jesus himself — if the Gospels truly represent his words — in all cases, applies the language of the Old Testament to himself in its proper and legitimate meaning; was he never mistaken in this matter, or have the passages of the Old Testament many meanings?

A. — As to this, as well as an hundred other questions of a similar character, probably no two — certainly, no ten — persons would entertain precisely the same opinion. And it is a matter of no great importance what opinion any one holds in respect to them, as they do not trench, in any degree, upon *essentials*. Various theories have been held by different theologians on this subject, and those who are interested in it, and would have correct data for making up a judgment in respect to it, would do well to consult their works. It would occupy too much space to discuss them in this place. For quite a full discussion of the various questions relating to it, see Palfrey's Lowell Lectures.

Q. 26. — Do you think that a belief in the miraculous inspiration of all or any of the writers of the Old Testament or New Testament; that a belief in all or any of the miracles therein mentioned; that a belief in the miraculous birth, life, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus; that a belief in his miraculous, universal, and infallible inspiration, is essential to a perfect Christian character, to salvation and acceptance with God, or even to participation in the Christian name? and if so, what doctrine of Morality or Religion really and necessarily rests, in whole or in part, on such a belief?

A. — We believe that the only essential requisite to acceptance with God, is a life and character, true alike to our own natures and destiny, and to the relation we sustain to God, and to our fellow men. In this we consider salvation itself to consist, and, of course, nothing else can be "essential to salvation." He who has this, *is saved*. Whatever is absolutely essential to the attainment of this end, in the fullest degree, is essential to salvation — and nothing more. Just so far, therefore, as a belief in one or all of the several facts and circumstances enumerated in this question,



are essential to a true life, just so far, and no farther, are they essential to salvation; and on him who maintains the latter, the burden of proof of the former lies, without question. We think no one will deny that a knowledge of the Truth taught by Jesus, respecting the true character of God, and the relation we sustain to him, and respecting the Immortality to which we are born, are essential in the vast majority, if not all, cases, and in the long run, to enable man to live a true life on earth. In order to live in accordance with all his relations, it is clear he must first know them. The question then is, how he is to know them. Individuals, if history be true, had reasoned them out, in a manner, by their unaided powers, and had endeavored to explain the grounds of their faith, and to propagate it in the world—to no purpose. The mass of mankind were without it. They were not competent to reason the matter out for themselves, since it required more knowledge, and greater powers, and habits of deeper thought and reflection than they could, the mass of them, attain to; and than they have yet attained to; or will, for many centuries to come, if they ever do. Indeed, without the aid of these truths, they never could do so. Those who have discovered them, have been the master-minds of the world. And but a very few of these, attained a very satisfactory belief in them. How weak was that of Cicero! It may be questioned whether, in any individual instance, it would have induced the self-devotion and the self-sacrifice of thousands of humble, ignorant, and uneducated Christian believers, that the history of the world records. No! the mass of mankind must have been left without this Truth, were man's reason the only light to guide to it. Another was needed, which the humblest and most ignorant could see, and use to walk by, as well as the most highly cultivated, disciplined, and refined. And this purports to be offered by Christianity. Here God himself—through his commissioned agent—professes to instruct mankind, once and for all, in these truths, so needful—so absolutely essential—to their welfare and happiness, and highest good. What the world wanted, here it has; information on this subject, from Him who cannot deceive, nor be mistaken; and whose simple word we may, therefore, take for it; thus placing all on a level in this respect; the loftiest mind, the most highly cultivated intellect, being no better

off, in respect to this, than the most ignorant and debased, the light of whose reason has only not gone out. God has given us his assertion for these few and simple facts, and all who can understand anything can understand this. And within the reach of all it may, and should be, placed.

But how can we be sure that it is God himself who has spoken, and not merely the man through whom He purports to speak, and whose reason alone we have to depend upon, in this most vital matter. We want an unquestionable proof—something that shall leave no doubt upon the mind; for on so important a matter we cannot bear doubts. One man says, “Never *man* spake like this man. God must be with him. The truths he utters, the words that come from his mouth, their excellence, their conformity to all the highest conceptions, aspirations, and hopes of our own minds and hearts, their adaptation to promote the happiness, virtue, and welfare of mankind, prove their source. They must be the words of God himself.” He believes these truths on the authority of God speaking through Christ, his voice and his words proving the presence of the speaker. Another says, “Never did man *live* as this man, unless God were with him. Never did unaided man exhibit in his whole life and actions, such high and heavenly virtues, such purity, self-command, patience, perseverance, and gentleness; such self-sacrificing philanthropy, and enduring virtue; such lofty, disinterested aims and acts.” He listens to God speaking through Christ—his presence proved by his virtues and perfections. The agent is clothed with his Master’s robe, whose beauty and glory prove his commission. But the bulk—the great mass of mankind—are most struck with the manifestations of power. They may not recognize the words, nor know the person of the Almighty, but his works there can be no mistake about. When the dead arise from their long sleep, when the broken limbs, and the diseased body, are restored—at a word the unresisting element becomes firm and stable, they cry out with one accord, “No man can do such *works*, unless God be with him.” They acknowledge the hand of the Monarch in the acts of his minister, and they would accept no other evidence. We thus see that the all-important point is, that the commissioned—the Christ should be acknowledged as such—that the message he brings may

be received as coming from Him who sends it, and as coming from whom alone, it has any value for man. Those who need not the message, or need it not from that source, if such there be, may let it alone. But for those who do need it, and who need it, likewise, as coming from that source, there it is, its authenticity proved by every variety of evidence adapted to every capacity or disposition ; among which each cannot fail to find that which shall satisfy him. And provided it do fully satisfy him, he may use that which he please, letting however others have the same privilege ; not sneering at, nor disparaging the value of that, which he himself finds no use for ; but grateful for the foreseeing wisdom, which has not left any without that which is of more value to him than life, or aught else.

The application of this to the case in hand, is obvious. A belief in any of the matters enumerated in this question, are just so far necessary to salvation and acceptance with God, as they are necessary to a belief in that Truth which is necessary to a man's attaining to that, in which salvation consists, and on which acceptance with God depends. If you believe those truths and live accordingly without a belief in *any* of them, — or, if you live aright, without even a belief in the truths at all — on any grounds — well and good ; no one can *deny* you salvation, if you *have* it. If you believe them, with the aid of any one or more of the enumerated articles, well and good. Those only are needful for your salvation. If you cannot believe them without the belief in all, then for you the belief in all is essential to your salvation. Thus the essentials differ with different persons. Taking the mass of mankind, that in which the essence of Christian faith subsists, — viz., a belief in Jesus, as the Christ, or a specially endowed Teacher from God, teaching the few simple truths, which he did, on the authority of God, this belief is essential for their salvation ; because it is essential to a belief in those truths, without which they cannot live the life they were designed to live, nor attain to that character in which salvation consists — be saved from the dominion of evil, and their lower natures. And we think that the mass of mankind, have needed, and do, at present, and will, for what we can see, for ages to come, the miraculous facts of the New Testament, one or all of them, (for to him who really believes in one, it answers the same purpose as the whole, provided his mind is so constituted that he

can accept one, after having rejected the rest) as a foundation for this faith — as a proof of the Divine commission of the Teacher, and the consequent Truth of what was taught; although the time may come, when the internal evidences, which appeal more exclusively to reflecting and cultivated minds, will have a higher relative importance to the external than they do, at present. And, therefore, it is that these latter are to be defended, and the incontestable authority on which they rest, as *facts*, to be maintained and insisted on, and demonstrated and spread abroad; only letting their real value, and just place, be understood. And, therefore it is, that those who are able to do without them, should let them alone; and not confound them with the many abuses and falsehoods, that have, in the course of ages, clustered around the fair fabric of our faith; nor spend on them, nor on those who believe in them, sneers, and taunts, and ridicule, which, on this subject, can belong, of right, to those alone who so ignorantly or flippantly make use of them. And they should remember that by an unanswerable sneer, or a bold assertion or fling, having no weight or value, but in the confidence and boldness with which it is uttered, that faith which is the only surety of a brother's virtue and hopes, in this life and another, may be fatally shipwrecked, — a consideration not to be neglected by any of those who hold one of the highest commands of their religion to be a true regard for all mankind as our brethren, — a regard which, to be true, cannot possibly stop short of his highest and best interests. There are abuses enough, and falsehoods enough, and absurdities enough connected with Christianity, in its present condition, to occupy all these weapons of controversial warfare, and upon these let them be expended. But let not *any* of the foundations of the edifice be torn away, in a well-meant zeal for the removal of that which incumbers and spoils its beauty, and interferes with its full efficiency, and designed uses.

*Q. 27.* — Do you believe that the two ordinances, — Baptism and the Lord's Supper, — are, in themselves, essential, necessary, and of primary importance as ends, valuable for their own sakes, or that they are but *helps* and *means* for the formation of the Christian character, and therefore valuable only so far as they help to form that character?

*A.* — It was hardly to be supposed that sufficient doubt existed as to the views entertained upon this subject by liberal Christians,



to render such a question as this necessary. No one, we presume, thinks of these ordinances in any other light than as means and helps, and therefore obligatory and valuable just so far, and no farther, than as they are means and helps. How far they may be so to him, each one must be his own judge, on a fair and candid view of the premises. Perhaps they may have been insisted on with an urgency, at times, which would seem to imply something more. The tendency undoubtedly is, as all history shows, to mingle and confound the less with the more important; and to manifest for the former a zeal which rightfully belongs only to the latter.

**Q. 28.** — Do you think it wrong or unchristian in another, to abandon and expose what he deems a popular error, or to embrace and proclaim an unpopular truth; do you count yourselves, theoretically, to have attained all religious and theological truth, and to have retained no error in your own Creed, so that it is wholly unnecessary for you, on the one hand, to re-examine your own opinions, or, on the other, to search further for Light and Truth, or do you think yourselves competent, without such search, or such examination, to pronounce a man an infidel, and no Christian, solely because he believes many things in Theology which you reject, and rejects some things which you believe?

**A.** — As to the first part of this question, the only answer is an unquestionable negative. And it were devoutly to be wished that there were more persons alive to see, and expose, and reform the numerous errors, abuses, and falsehoods, that have crept alike into Religion, Politics, and Social Life; and are awaiting new Luthers, Howards, and Manns, to arise and battle them.

As to the last part, those to whom it is addressed have alone a just title to give an answer to it.

The views respecting the New Testament, and Christianity, the free and open expression of which has lately excited so much attention in our religious community, and has given rise to the controversy, out of which originated the questions we have been considering, are justly to be regarded as but a necessary reaction and result, from the still widely prevalent views on the same topics, embraced in the popular Puritan theology, — views which those who still adhere to them, often do not scruple to stigmatize as hardly defensible, when viewed by the light of reason and common sense, — and which sound knowledge, and just views of the interpretation of the Sacred Records, show to be equally indefensible, on

any other grounds; and which, were they ever so true, do not deserve the all-important attention which is demanded and asserted<sup>b</sup> for them, as *essential doctrines* of Christianity; which that they are very far from being, the views expressed in the preceding Answers, if found to be sound, sufficiently demonstrate. From these, those of Mr. Parker may be considered as the return swing of the pendulum, — the ebb of the wave, which had flowed up, till reason, common sense, and a sound knowledge, were alike overwhelmed, — as necessary a consequence of them, as was the licentiousness of the court of the second Charles, a legitimate child of the austerities, and the needlessly gloomy and narrow views and practices of the Puritans. The one go as far beyond the centre of truth on one side, as the others are behind it, on the other. Both are unsatisfactory, when fairly considered and tested; and both have a tendency to drive common men from all study or consideration of the sacred records, — if not from all religion, — though as true religion is never bound up indissolubly with any records or system of doctrines, it may be, as it is, found among all classes of opinions. In the one case, a pointed and glaring contradiction to his speculative views, constantly stares in the face, and forces itself upon the convictions of, him who would read the Gospel records as he would read other works of history, or biography; and, in the other, our preconceived opinions are continually, but silently and surely, undermining our faith, — tripping up our convictions, — as to the veracity of the narrative, at all; there being no sufficiently satisfactory grounds for leaving out a part of it, without, on the same grounds, rejecting the whole.

That persons, with either set of opinions, may, and do, take the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, or a few declarations which fell, like dew-drops on a parched land, from the lips of Jesus, and satisfied with their truth, on whatever grounds, may make them the rule of their life, and guide of their conduct, letting the rest go, as it were, by default, — it cannot be doubted. And that such have every true and valuable title to the name of Christian, there can be still less doubt. And it seems an inference, from which it is not easy to escape, that one who makes such passages the groundwork, and substantial material, of daily or weekly teachings, has every most valuable and essential title to the character of a Christian

teacher. Surely, as much so, in the case of the holder of one set of opinions, as in that of the other, the one not departing from the exact point of a true Christian theology, in one direction, farther than the others do, in the opposite, — and the one having no greater tendency, by his preaching, to produce infidelity and irreligion, as we think ample testimony might be brought to prove, than the other. Indeed, we cannot but think that the Christian life preached, entirely divested from any theology whatever, would produce a more beneficial influence, than when preached in a nominal connection with a doubtful or false system of belief. And there is no little inconsistency in the conduct of those, who refuse to acknowledge as a Christian man, or teacher, him who rejects the Christian miracles — though he hold to the Christian truths, as previously defined, and the Christian life; if, at the same time, they do not refuse to admit those who incumber them, and bind up with them, in an indissoluble connection, the many weary burdens of a Trinitarian and Calvinistic theology. The Christian truths are the *essentials* of Christian faith. In what connection they may stand, is a matter of secondary importance. It certainly makes little difference whether they are insufficiently supported, or whether they are so heavily laden with burdens of other matter as to be unable to stand under them. In either case, they might, perchance, eventually come to the ground. But ~~not~~ more certainly, in the one, than in the other. Would it not be a truer course, for those who truly care for them, to help to sustain them, whatever their position, than either to trip them up, or to push them over, in their weakness. They are, in themselves, and their influence, wherever found — the better, the purer their condition — too good a thing to be lightly suffered to perish; and while we should give them the firmest and broadest foundation, to which they are, in any way, entitled; and while we should relieve them, as fast, and as far, as possible, of all the useless loads that have been laid upon them, we should acknowledge them wherever they, or their effects, appear, and sustain them, whatever their condition, for their own sake, and that of Him who lived and died for them. Whenever Christians, of all sects, shall be willing to see that these alone are essentials, and to give to everything else — of belief or practice — that value only which its relative importance, in respect to these, entitles it to, then

will there be seen a true Catholic Christian Church, — one whose limits and whose power will be more widely extended than was ever that which thundered its mandates from the Vatican, and which no Luther will be able to overthrow, since the weapons — Reason, Truth, and Scripture — which were so powerful in his hands, will be all engaged on her side, her champions and supports. And then only will Christianity bless the world with its beneficent influences, in a manner to realize the beatific visions of Hebrew bards and prophets, of old.

Mr. Parker has led off gallantly and fearlessly, as the advance-guard, in a Reform which is destined to proceed through the whole of Christendom, in its steady, but sure and searching, progress; and which will not stop in its course, till every falsehood shall have been stripped away, and every incumbrance, whether within or without, shall have been torn from the now moss-grown and dilapidated and tottering ruin of the Christian Church; and till a fabric, as simple in its structure, but as fair and beautiful in its proportions, as that which existed in the conceptions of its founder, shall have arisen, whose foundations shall be deep laid in each man's reason and affections, and whose walls shall be built of the solid and enduring masonry of *individual* Christian virtue, and Christian character. The time has come when every topic connected with religion, and theology, must be thoroughly investigated, — when the Scriptures, and all matters relating to them, are to be thoroughly sifted, and their actual and relative value tested, — till the truth alone shall remain, — till every grain of chaff shall have been separated from the wheat. There is no point upon which the concentrated light of reason, and a wide and sound knowledge may not, and should not, be concentrated. And in the process, let not the friends of Truth be too anxious about her. There is nothing to be feared for her. She is many centuries old, and has had much experience in the world, and is fully able to take care of herself. Let them but clear a way for her; and not themselves, in their well-meant zeal for her welfare, stand in her way, and she will make her own progress to the minds and hearts of men, without danger of suffering from the impertinent freedoms of any one.

The pioneer may be forced, as he may not be unwilling, to fall back, in some degree, from the position he has, at first, taken up.



But the Unitarian body, from which he started, will not, if true to themselves, hesitate to follow on, with more caution and prudence, it may be, and with a more careful regard to the ground they may place themselves upon, — in his steps, and for his support. And as surely as they refuse to do so, *as a body*, a bold band of volunteers will start from their own, or some other, ranks, and, gathering recruits on all hands, from the highways and byways of life, press on to the enterprise, and snatch from their hands the banner they prove themselves unworthy to bear onwards, and the glory of the achievement, to whose accomplishment — though offered to their hands — they shall have shown themselves recreant. They cannot stand still. They must either fall back, and ignobly consign themselves to the fate of the sects, which are expiring around them — sick to death of their creeds, and systems, and narrow sectarian divisions and practices — or they must press on with new vigor and energy, and without faltering or flinching, in that path of Reform, on which they have started, and where only will they accomplish their true mission. “Liberty, Holiness, Love,” is a good motto. But a motto is nothing — principles are nothing — unless men are true to them. Let the Unitarians look well to this. Their principles and their practices, in themselves, are nearer the truth, than are those of most of the Christian world. But let them see to it, that they do not depart from their original purity, and that they are left open to all the modifications and improvements, which circumstances may require, or the advances of mind — or of the race — may demand. And, above all, let them be fearlessly independent — alike of the popular cry, and of the opinions of other sects or parties. Let them have regard to the Truth — and the Truth only. Then shall their banner float freely to the breeze on every hill-top of the land. And under its guidance — though it may never be America’s boast that her drum-beat encircles the earth — it shall be her higher glory to plant an emblem of more enduring conquest than that of any earthly power, on eminences, where it shall never lose the smiles of the source of light, in his daily course, nor the more enduring smiles and blessings of the Source of all sources, and the Giver of all light.



78  
THE EXCLUSIVE PRINCIPLE CONSIDERED.

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# TWO SERMONS

ON

CHRISTIAN UNION

AND

THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPELS.

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BY WILLIAM H. FURNESS,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
IN PHILADELPHIA.

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BOSTON:

BENJAMIN H. GREENE.

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MDCCCXLV.

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#### NOTE.

At the request of friends in this vicinity, Mr. Furness has consented that these Sermons, first printed in Philadelphia, for the use of his own Society, be reprinted here.

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## SERMON I.

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ROM. VIII. 9.

NOW IF ANY MAN HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, HE IS NONE OF HIS.

I HAVE recently upon more than one occasion endeavored to enforce what seems to me a principle of the first importance, namely, that Christianity is not a form but a spirit. And by this I have meant, as I have said, not merely that Christianity is not a form of worship, or a form of words, but further, that it is not a form of thought. And by a form of thought, I mean an opinion, or set of opinions, the result of a mere intellectual process. But Christianity is a spirit. It is a life which manifests itself not in those views which a man avows as the conclusions of his understanding, and which admit of being stated in words, be they correct or false, but in the prevailing temper of the man. A spirit of truth, of justice, of freedom, of love, manifesting itself, not in one particular way, but in all the ways in which a man shows what manner of man he is,—this it is by which an individual proves that he is in sympathy with Christ. He may have very singular opinions all the while, and very false opinions, as it seems to us, upon what we consider points of very great moment, and yet if he evinces a love of what is just and true, we are to hold him a Christian brother, wearing a spiritual resemblance to Jesus Christ. And we are not to take those opinions of his, which seem erroneous

to us, as the only, or as the chief tests of his spirit. The methods are innumerable by which we are to ascertain what spirit a man is of. His daily life and conversation, his whole manner of dealing with his fellow-men, his habitual deportment, the whole man shows us what he is. And we are to judge not partially and superficially, but charitably and justly, and take not his professions, not his words, but his spirit as his grand Christian qualification.

It seems to me that this is the great principle of Religion — of Christianity. What is it that makes Christ himself appear so glorious, so divine in our eyes! His Spirit. It is not any one particular thing that he said or did. His words—they are simple and eloquent, but words of similar import have been uttered in the world before and since his time. It is the spirit, which filled those words, that makes them so large and commanding in our ears. His miracles—they were wonderful demonstrations of power,—but still it was the spirit in which they were wrought, that renders them the works of God in our view. His death—it was a death of torture, but others have suffered physical pain as severe—it was the spirit with which he suffered: this it is that glorified his cross and will glorify it forever.

Is it not so, my hearers? The spirit of Christ, the life of his heart and soul, which manifested itself outwardly in his whole manner of bearing himself, which made him merciful and just and self-sacrificing and holy—this it is that looks so beautiful, and godlike in him, and has given him such an empire in the inmost heart of the world.

And what was it that he sought to do? What was the aim of all his words, works and sufferings? Was it not to breathe his spirit into the world? He lived for the enlightening of the intellect, it is true, but this was not his first, his principal purpose. His grand concern was with the human heart, to renew that, by communicating to it a new spirit, by awakening in it new dispositions, new affections. The appeal which he made was directly to the hearts of men. It is upon the pure, and the humble, and the merciful, and the peace-loving that he pours out his benedictions. Again and again, he said

that all Religion consisted in love, in the love of God and man. Now love is not a matter of the intellect. It is a spirit, a life in the heart, a feeling, an affection. When one asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life, Christ did not stop to discourse to him about matters of faith, about points within the province of the understanding only, but he bade him go away and treat his neighbor as he would be treated himself. He did not wish men to cry Lord, Lord, to him, but his language is, "Do the will of my Father in Heaven, and his will is that you should love him with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself, and you will then be able to distinguish what is from Heaven, and what is of earth." "He that keepeth my commandments (and his commandments were the eternal laws of God, written in the hearts of all men,) he it is that loveth me." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, — by what? By the soundness of your creed? By the correctness of your views of my nature, or my miracles? Oh no, but by the love you cherish one toward another." It was in the very spirit of Christ that the Apostle declares, as in our text, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Recollect how Jesus talked to his personal friends, just before his death. They were afflicted at the prospect of being separated from him, and to comfort them, he told them that they should have another guide and comforter, who would be to them all that he had been and more, and what was that other comforter? Why, it was simply "the spirit of truth," a true spirit. That, he declared, would be all-sufficient to enlighten their minds, to guide them through all difficulties, and sustain them under all sorrows, and lead them to everlasting peace. And do we not fully recognize the perfect truth of this declaration? What is it that man needs to guide him through life, through all its temptations and perils, but a right spirit, not a spirit of fear, or a spirit of pride, or a spirit of selfishness, but a spirit of truth, and rectitude, and purity, and love. He does not require a creed as he requires a spirit. The most rational and scriptural views concerning God and Jesus Christ and the duty and destiny of man would be of no use to him, unless his spirit were a true spirit. And if he

has such a spirit, his understanding may be obscured by many errors, and they may seem great errors to us — he may have false views of what we call the doctrines of Religion, he may be ignorant of what we call religious truth, yet he has a light in his heart. He honestly desires to see things as they are. His ruling object is to be just and charitable, and in these dispositions is his salvation ; and here is his Christianity, here is the mark of his relationship to Christ. My friends, the spirit of a man is everything. It is the light, and power, and holiness of God in the human soul. It is God inspiring, guiding, protecting the frail creature whom he has placed here in the midst of the infinitude of his works. Let us see a pure, honest, loving spirit in a man, and we will receive him, shall we not? as a friend and brother, worthy of all confidence and respect, whatever religious name he bears, and even if he bear no religious name.

The doctrine, which I have now endeavored to set forth, receives to a certain extent the assent of all who call themselves Christians. All admit that the spirit, tone, habit of a man is of quite indispensable moment, that if his spirit is false, nothing else that he has, no soundness of faith and opinion, is of the slightest worth to him. But although the truth I have stated is thus universally assented to, yet very few accept it to the uttermost limit of its application — in all its length and breadth. How stands it with our religious denomination — with us, Unitarians, liberal Christians as we call ourselves? Are we faithful to this great principle of the supremacy of the spirit over the letter?

My friends, Unitarian Christianity has now reached a period in its history when this question is to be asked and answered. And we have to make up our minds and come to an understanding with ourselves. Hitherto the contest of liberal Christianity has been with orthodoxy, and Unitarians have been the assertors of freedom of conscience and inquiry, and Christian charity, and, in the ardor of our liberality, we have insisted over and over again, that whether a man believe in the trinity or the unity of God, whether he receive the tenets of the orthodox faith or reject them, is a small matter, if he only



has a free, honest, charitable temper. We have taken up the noble doctrine of the Apostle, and declared that without a charitable spirit a man is nothing, though he have all faith so that he could remove mountains, and that with charity he is all, whatever may be the errors of his understanding. So far we have done well. To those who believe more than we do, we have been disposed to extend the utmost liberality. We have been ready to admit them into our pulpits, even though they refused to accord the same courtesy to us. But how is it with those who have recently appeared in our own body, who believe less than we do?

We shall obtain something like an answer to this question by looking at the state of things which has arisen among Unitarian Christians in that part of our country where Unitarianism flourishes in the greatest strength. Separated as this religious society is from the great body of those, to whom we most nearly approximate in matters of religious faith, there may be many of my hearers only slightly or not at all informed as to the circumstances to which I refer. Let me therefore for your information, state the case which has arisen.

The chief strength of our religious denomination is, you know, in New England, in Boston and its vicinity. There our brethren have been asserting, for some thirty years back, the great principle of religious liberty. They have insisted distinctly and eloquently upon the right and duty of private judgment. It has followed as a natural consequence, that all, the younger members of our body especially, have sought to exercise this right and discharge this duty. Being taught to prove all things, to judge for themselves, to abjure all human authority in the sacred subject of religion, they have endeavored to follow this teaching, and they have arrived, in the exercise of this freedom, at certain conclusions, which they consider, no doubt, as in advance of the views of Unitarians generally, and which, at all events, differ materially from the modes of thought generally received among us. Among these free inquirers, is a clergyman, Theodore Parker, settled at West Roxbury, about six miles from Boston, to whose character, talents, learning and devotedness, all parties unite in pay-

ing the homage of their respect. He has expressed his peculiar opinions with great freedom and boldness, both in the pulpit and through the press. He writes with a stirring eloquence, and is listened to by large numbers with great interest, and many who were once skeptical, have had awakened in them a new sense of the worth and solemnity of the vital principles of religion. But the course he has pursued, has excited very great alarm among those denominated liberal Christians.

The custom of exchanging pulpits prevails, as you probably know, more generally in Boston and its vicinity than elsewhere. There a minister seldom preaches much more than half the time in his own pulpit. This custom of exchanging has its advantages. It had its origin in mere courtesy; still it has become so well established that it is considered a mark of Christian fellowship. Of this courtesy, Mr. Parker has ceased, almost entirely, to be an object. Nearly all the Unitarian pulpits have been closed against him. Numbers go out of Boston almost every Sunday to hear him in his own church. Thus things have gone on. But recently Mr. Sargent, one of the ministers of the poor who are supported, and whose churches have been built by the associated Unitarian churches of Boston, ventured to exchange with Mr. Parker; a step which occasioned so strong an expression of disapproval from the friends and supporters of the ministry of the poor, that Mr. Sargent has thought fit to resign his situation, and the whole matter has produced no small stir. Another of our brethren, Mr. Clarke, has expressed his wish, and, I believe, his intention to exchange with Mr. Parker, and this has added to the interest which is felt in the present position of things.

Now, my friends, I have stated this case to you, not merely for your information, or to gratify an idle curiosity, but because I believe it to be your duty and mine to form an opinion upon this subject. This is our duty as men, as Christians, as professors of liberal Christianity. And furthermore, I wish you to look at this case, side by side, with that Christian principle, which it is the aim of this discourse to exhibit. The spirit of Theodore Parker, as a man, as an honest seeker of truth, as a

faithful and eloquent preacher of the great moral principles which constituted the sum and substance of the preaching of Christ himself, is unquestioned. All recognize—all admit it. He gives evidence then of that spirit which is the only true badge of Christian discipleship. It is of little moment, comparatively, what he thinks upon certain points, or what he says; his life bears witness for him. The boldness with which he has avowed his honest convictions, affords some presumption of his love of truth, that spirit which led Christ to encounter the opposition of the world.

For my own part, I cannot help feeling very deeply, that in withdrawing from him the courtesy of an occasional exchange our brethren at the Eastward fall short of those large principles of religious liberty which they have been for years so eloquently asserting. They have placed themselves in a false position. Have they not taken the very same attitude toward this, their brother, which their orthodox brethren took towards them some thirty years since? To be sure they are not quite so denunciatory. They are not, it may be, denunciatory at all. But then the orthodox themselves were not so violent against Unitarians, as the old Catholic church was against the first who ventured to dissent from her opinions. Still, in Catholics and in the orthodox, one and the same exclusive spirit was discernible; and now we grieve to add, even those who style themselves liberal Christians, are giving evidence of that same spirit. They have had charity and to spare for those who believe more than they do. But for those who believe less, the mantle of their liberality is all too narrow. They have abjured the authority of written creeds. They have insisted that, however great faith is, charity is far greater. But now, it appears, that Unitarians have a creed after all, an unwritten creed, to be sure, but still a creed, from which he who dissents is expected to withdraw from their fellowship. It appears to me very plainly, that this is all wrong, radically wrong; wrong in principle. Christianity is not a form of opinion, but a spirit. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

And besides, I account it a manifest insult to truth to fear the slightest breath of error. If Mr. Parker is wrong, he can



be shown to be wrong. If what he says is a delusion of his own brain, what can it avail against the truth of Almighty God? I care not what his talents and learning and eloquence may be, they are all but dust in the balance against the divine force of truth. Give him a fair field then, and see how Truth shall triumph. It is admitted, I believe, that he says a great deal of truth, and says it exceedingly well to the edifying of the souls of his hearers. He is listened to with seriousness by very serious-minded persons. It is only occasionally, not always and throughout, in all his discourses, that he is held to inculcate what is erroneous. Have we any sense of the greatness of truth then, when we stand in dread of such brief and occasional statements of what we consider error?

Ah, but, it will be said, the faith of people will be shaken by such statements. Then I say, that a faith so easily shaken, must be shaking already. It cannot deserve the name of faith. It can have no root in personal conviction. And the sooner it is shaken all to pieces, the better. There will then be room and necessity for the formation of a better grounded faith. This dread of new opinions proves, I fear, not an attachment to the truth, but the unbelief of those who cherish it. They feel that the ground is not firm under their feet, that they are standing, not upon the solid rock of the everlasting mountain, but upon an avalanche of snow, which the slightest concussion of the air, even so much as may be occasioned by a mere whisper, will send tumbling down into the abyss.

Possibly, it may be said, that Mr. Parker's views are very plausible; that he sets them forth with great power; that they are made in his hands to look very much like truth, and that therefore he is not to be listened to. If such be the case, who are they who will venture to assume the responsibility of standing between him and the public, and of preventing, as far as in them lies, his access to the public ear? Certainly not those, they are not the persons to take upon themselves this responsibility, who cannot make it clear that he is wrong. How do they know but he is right, if they cannot see the difference between his views and the truth?



On the other hand, it is much more probably urged against him, that what he says is so false, so evidently wide of the truth, that on this account he ought not to be heard. To this I may say that if his views are so glaringly false, their fallacy may be all the more easily shown; nay, if they are so erroneous, they will be seen to be erroneous, without showing. At all events, this exclusion of him from the pulpits to which he was once admitted — this refusal of an occasional exchange with him once or twice in a year is, to say the least, not very wise policy, as the result bears witness. He has been invited, I hear, to go and settle in Boston. This he has declined doing; but he has consented, I understand, with the consent of his own people, to preach once every Sunday in that city. His ability and eloquence are sufficient to attract large numbers around him. The interest in his preaching in general, and in his peculiar views in particular, must, of course, be heightened by the position into which he has been forced. And in the exposition of his opinions he will have the great advantage of having secured in a measure the sympathy of his hearers beforehand, and his influence will, of course, be increased.

But you will ask, What are his opinions? I reply that all his writings, of which I have any knowledge, evince the strongest faith in the great moral principles of Christianity, in those practical truths which are presented in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the teachings of Christ generally. These truths he illustrates and enforces with no ordinary boldness and power. His heart comes out with his words. He may offend good taste occasionally, and sometimes his style may not be the simplest, but it is evident that he writes and speaks from strong personal conviction. He aims to regenerate, enliven and exalt the human soul. It is not to be questioned that the eternal principles of justice, holiness and love, are more precious in his eyes than gold, yea, than fine gold. He reverences also the spirit of Christ. Thus he speaks of Christ in a recently published discourse: "Jesus is the greatest person of the ages; the proudest achievement of the human race — he taught the Absolute Religion — Love to God and man. That God has yet greater men in store I doubt not; to say this is not to detract

from the majestic character of Christ, but to affirm the omnipotence of God. When they come, the old contest will be renewed — the living Prophet stoned ; the dead one worshiped. Be that as it may, there are duties he teaches us far different from those most commonly taught. He was the greatest fact in the whole history of man. Had he conformed to what was told him by men ; had he counseled only with flesh and blood, he had been nothing but a poor Jew ; the world had lost that rich endowment of religious genius, that richest treasure of religious life, the glad tidings of the one Religion, Absolute and True. What if he had said — as others, ‘ none can be greater than Moses — none so great ! ’ He had been a dwarf ; the spirit of God had faded from his soul ! But he conferred with God, not men ; took counsel of his hopes, not his fears. Working for men, with men, by men, trusting in God and pure as Truth, he was not scared at the little din of Church and State, and trembled not, though Pilate and Herod were made friends only to crucify him, that was a born King of the world. Methinks I hear that lofty spirit say to you or me, Poor brother, fear not, nor despair. The goodness actual in me is possible for all. God is near thee now as then to me ; rich as ever in truth, as able to create, as willing to inspire. Daily and nightly He showers down his infinitude of light. Open thine eyes to see, thy heart to live. Lo, God is here.”

This will suffice as an example of Mr. Parker’s mode of speaking in regard to Jesus Christ. Thus he believes. But he does not believe in the miracles of the life of Christ. He questions the whole New Testament history. I understand him to believe in the genuineness and authenticity of the book of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Epistles of Paul, because, as I suppose, he cannot, as no one can, resist the celebrated argument for these which Paley has exhibited in that matchless work, the *Horæ Paulinæ*. But the Gospels he distinctly declares he puts little faith in, especially where they narrate the extraordinary events of the life of Christ.

And here after all that I have said, it may be asked : How is it possible to call one, holding such opinions, a Christian believer ? Has not the same question, I ask in return, been

raised again and again concerning Unitarians themselves? There are thousands at this very day, who are wholly at a loss to see how those, who reject the Supreme Divinity of Christ, can pretend to be Christians. The Unitarian, rejecting this doctrine, professes to be a Christian believer nevertheless, and holds his distinct and solemn profession of Christianity as good as another's, quoting the Apostle: "If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's." Although we may not be able to reconcile the opinions of an individual with his professions of Christian faith, we are bound to respect that profession, and to believe that he renders to Christ, all that he honestly thinks Christ ever claimed. At all events, we must hold first and fast to that Christian spirit which is in imminent danger of being lost, the instant we deny the Christian name to such as breathe the Christian spirit. From that moment we are sure of being betrayed into all manner of injustice and uncharitableness; and thus Christ is wounded more fatally than by any errors of opinion.

It is needless for me to say that I utterly dissent from these peculiar views of Mr. Parker's. I hold him to be in what is to me a most manifest error. I know not where his eyes are that they are blind to the divine stamp of truth, impressed so deeply and so generally upon those brief sketches that we have of the life of Christ. I cannot find in his writings any arguments, that have to my mind the slightest weight, for the peculiar opinions on these points which he has expressed. I hold him to be under a great mistake. He does not see what I see in the narratives of the New Testament, and what, the more I read and examine this wonderful book, grows more and more luminous to me. I hold the Gospels to be perfect specimens of truth-telling. The character of Christ itself is not more truly wonderful, than these histories are for the simplicity and pervading truthfulness with which they are written. I have the liveliest conviction of the reality of all the principal facts which they record concerning the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mr. Parker looks upon all the particular circumstances related of Christ, as mere fables fabricated by

one or another and designed to glorify Jesus. If this be so, how is it that mere fictions should harmonize so thoroughly, so profoundly with each other, and with the reality. The consistency and naturalness of the character of Christ, how perfectly are they preserved throughout! The miracles, were they fictions, would mar the character of Christ. It would be like mixing coarse clay with the finest gold. Now for the most part, the accounts of his miracles not only harmonize with the spirit of Jesus, they exalt our sense of the greatness of that spirit. On what occasion does he appear more godlike, more sublime, than at the grave of Lazarus. If that scene were a fabrication, it would belittle him, whereas in fact it gives us a new idea of moral greatness. Not the extraordinary physical power which he exerted on that occasion is the wonder, but the wonder is the sublime self-possession, the absence of all vain-glory, all parade, all self-reliance, this it is that we consider the great marvel and miracle of that portion of his history. Mr. Parker may reject the histories of Christ, but it is to those histories and to the particulars of those histories that he is indebted for the lofty ideas he has formed of the spirit of Christ.

But it is not to my purpose, now, to answer Mr. Parker. It could not be done within the limits of one discourse. But I believe that it can be done, and will be done — that he is in an error, I have no doubt. But I would speak a word now for Christian justice, and freedom and love. I have not been moved by any feeling of personal friendship, for I never saw Mr. Parker, nor have I had any correspondence with him. For the truth's sake, let us be just, liberal and free. Let us not insult Truth by any unworthy dread of error. Let us hold fast to the only Christian standard — the spirit, the spirit. This is the one thing needful. This it is alone, by which men will be recognized by Christ, and accepted of God, and not by any matter of opinion. Where the Spirit of Jesus is, it will sooner or later lead us all to the Truth as it is in Jesus.



## SERMON II.

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MATTH. XXII. 42.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

THE object of the special service, which is to be observed this morning, is, briefly, the commemoration of Christ. We would refresh and vivify in our hearts the grand idea of the Man of Nazareth. And why do we do this? Why do we commemorate Christ? I answer, as I have answered many times before, in the first place, for what he has done for us. Our whole condition, illuminated and blest by the simple and sublime truth, which he infused into the world, bears witness to our great obligations to him. And, secondly, for what he was. We commemorate him not only for his doing, but also for his being.

The question arises, What was he? What manner of being was Jesus of Nazareth? The subject, which this question opens to us, I have often in various ways considered; but the peculiar circumstances, to which I referred on the morning of the last Lord's day will, I trust, give to this familiar topic a new interest, and ensure your awakened attention. It is of great importance, if on no other account yet for the simple truth's sake, that we should have as distinct and living idea, as we may, of Jesus Christ. And I ask again, What was he? What manner of being was he?

For an answer to this question, it is very plain where we are

to go. Not to our fellow-christians; for from them we can get nothing but a confused mass of contradictory answers. We must go to the professed accounts which have come down to us, of the Life of Christ, in brief to the four Gospels. Whatever knowledge is to be obtained of Jesus Christ, is to be found here, or it is to be found nowhere. We have no other means of information.

Now there is one fact in reference to the four Gospels, upon which, I wish that your attention may be fixed once for all; because it is a fact altogether undisputed. No man, who has at all looked into the subject, or who has been in any degree qualified to form an opinion upon it, has ever questioned the fact, that these Gospels do contain some truth. I do not mean, merely, that they contain some moral and religious truth, for all the world freely and fully admits that they contain a great deal of truth of this description; but I mean that all admit that they contain some historical truth, some truth respecting the life as well as the teachings of Christ. Questions have been raised, and earnestly and laboriously discussed as to the date of the Gospels: when they were written, and as to their authorship: whether they really were written by the persons whose names they bear. But as to the fact, that they do contain some basis of historical truth, more or less broad, that there is in them a thread of truth, more or less attenuated, there has been no question. Even our friend and brother of whose opinions I spoke last Sunday, and the German school of theology, from which he appears to have derived those opinions, admit that there is some historical truth in the Gospels; that they are good in history, so far as the simple facts of his existence, his calling as a teacher, and his violent death are concerned. Here then is a point upon which we are all agreed. You may not think it much, but it is something. It affords common ground to start from, and it helps to simplify the whole subject. And the vital question now is, "How far are the Gospels true? To what extent are they to be depended upon?"

Before I endeavor to give this inquiry such a reply as may be given within the limits of a single discourse, there are two or three things to be considered.

If some have come to the conclusion that the Gospels contain only a small grain of historical truth, is it any wonder? Some have come to this conclusion. Nay, the fact cannot be disguised, that a great many appear to have leaped to this conclusion, fancying it to be somewhat more stable ground, than the mire of utter uncertainty into which they were sinking. I know from my own observation that this is the opinion, not of a solitary individual, but of numbers, who have been brought to it, not by the arguments of one writer or another, but by their own reflections on the matter, — whether their reflections, by the way, of which such an opinion is the result, have been sound and rational, is a question indeed upon which one may have very strong doubts. Still the fact that many have taken up with the idea that the four Gospels contain only the smallest possible quantity of historical truth cannot be denied.

And for my own part I cannot help thinking that the dread which is evinced at the publication of this idea, betrays the existence of a more general unbelief in the historical truth of the Gospels, than is openly avowed. Men do not fear what they consider has no force in it. Where a well-grounded conviction of truth is cherished, no alarm is felt at the expression of opposing opinions. They are regarded as mere shadows. But when no such conviction exists, when the faith, which men have in any point, is a mere matter of prescription and conformity, founded upon no conscious basis of reason, but only on early prejudices, then it must be guarded against every whisper of objection. It is like a long buried corpse, which so long as it has been carefully sealed up, has worn the beautiful semblance of life, but open the coffin, and let but a breath of the free air of heaven reach it, and it falls at once into a heap of dust. We read of portions of the earth so infested by ants, that those minute insects will sometimes eat out the heart and strength of all the timbers and joists of a dwelling, leaving it a perfect shell. Apparently it is as strong and sound as any other dwelling, but let the gentlest wind blow, and it is at once a ruin. To the inmates of such a house every cloud, though no

bigger than a man's hand, must be a terror. We have here a lively representation of that popular profession of Christian faith which men mistake for faith itself. A handsome substantial edifice to all appearances, but there is no soundness in its beams, no heart in the timbers, and its occupants tremble at the wild winds of heaven. If it were founded upon a rock, and built itself of solid stone, they would laugh at the gusts of Error, and cry, 'Let the wind blow, and sweep away the dust and freshen the stagnant atmosphere.'

Be this as it may, whether the want of faith in the historical truth of the Gospels be as prevalent as I have said or not, that the want exists there can be no doubt. And I ask again, is it any wonder that some should come to the conclusion that the four Accounts of the life of Christ, contain only a very small portion of historical truth? Is it not very natural that such an opinion should make its appearance? Consider how for long ages it has been insisted that the Gospels were plenarily inspired, written by the supernatural dictation of the Eternal Spirit of Truth, and that they are true to every word and letter. Such a pretension in behalf of these writings, made in the very face of the most obvious marks of human hands in their whole structure, must needs drive some to the opposite opinion. From the beginning of the world extremes have always produced extremes, and the believing too much is always sure to be followed by the believing too little. The history of human opinions has always been represented by the movement of a pendulum.

I have another remark to make. A distinguished English writer, a man who had a rare poetic eye, has declared, in reference to that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning with "To be, or not to be, that is the question," that he was utterly unable to say whether it was good, bad, or indifferent, it had been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men — it had been so torn from its living place and continuity, that it had become to him a perfectly dead member. Now, I say, the Scriptures have been treated in the same ignorant



and unworthy way. They have been commented upon in a narrow and childish spirit, wrested and tortured to make them conform to certain dogmas, of which their authors never dreamed, and in accordance with a false philosophy, as well as a false theology. There has been but little that is free, candid and generous, in the methods of exposition to which the Gospels have been submitted. Men have not taken them in hand to see what they really are and what they actually mean, but their object has been to make them speak the language of their poor prejudices and opinions. Of course, even after we see how false and unworthy this way of treating these books is, our minds are still embarrassed by the injurious associations which have fastened themselves upon the language, style, and whole structure of the Bible, and not one in ten thousand reads it with that freshness, and freedom, and candor, with which it would be read, if it were now for the first time put into our hands, a new book, which we had never before seen. On this account therefore we cannot be surprised, if candid and truth-seeking men should not be able to see the Gospels in their true character all at once. Now, although for these reasons it must of course be difficult to ascertain the precise character of these records of the life of Christ, yet, I am strong in the conviction, it is by no means impossible. And I return to the question, "How far are the Gospels true? To what extent are they to be depended upon?"

In considering the present question I do not think it at all necessary — at least it is not of the first importance, that we should fix the precise date of these four accounts of Christ, the very year when they were written. This cannot be done with any accuracy. And even if it could, it would not avail much one way or the other. Even if it could be proved to the general satisfaction that they were written the very year after the events, which they relate, took place, of what use would it be if the histories themselves did not bring with them the air and the marks of truth? On the other hand, what if it were shown that they were not written until twenty years or more

after the events related occurred. This is the date generally assigned to the Gospels by the learned. What then? The length of the interval between the happening of the events and the composition of these narratives of the events, cannot outweigh the evidence of truth which the narratives furnish in their whole style and structure, supposing them to contain such internal evidence.

If any one, by the way, is disposed to attach any importance to this long interval of twenty years, and to decide that little credit is to be given to accounts of events written so long after the events took place, let him consider, that, although these accounts were written so long after the occurrence of the things related, it stands to reason that although the story of the life of Jesus was not written until years had elapsed, it must have been told again and again. It must, in the very nature of the case, have constituted one of the chief topics of the conversation and preaching of the personal friends of Jesus. They must have dwelt continually upon the incidents of his life. When they sat down to write out their recollections, they did not have to task their memories to recall things which had long lain forgotten in their minds, buried under other and different things. They simply transcribed or put down in an enduring form what had been related orally for years. But whether this explains the case or not, it is of small moment comparatively, whether a narrative of certain events can be traced up to within twenty years, or two hundred years of the events related, if it bears upon it that impress which truth alone can give, and which no lapse of years can obliterate.

As it is not of essential importance to fix the date of the Gospels, neither do I hold it essentially important that we should settle their authorship, that we should be satisfied that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. For the establishment of this point, you must rely upon the fallible authority of others entirely, or enter upon a laborious course of inquiry, for which the common avocations of life afford you but little opportunity, and even then you would still have to depend on human authority. And besides, what if it were proved,

beyond reasonable question, that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, wrote the Gospels which bear their names, or that they did not write them? In either case, what difference would it make? If these accounts are in themselves incredible, no mere human authority could make them otherwise. On the other hand, if they bear the Divine signatures of truth, those marks which belong only to truth and nature, then the names of their authors can add to them but very little weight. And further, we know very little indeed of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. If indeed they are, as I believe, the authors of the Gospels, then we know something of them through these works of theirs. In fact we learn more of them through their works, if these are the works, than from any other quarter. But then in this case it is their works that give weight to their names, and not their names to their works.

Putting aside therefore the questions concerning the date and authorship of the Gospels, as matters of secondary importance, as matters, which, even if settled, would not decide the great question for us, we must look into the Gospels themselves. It is conceded on all hands that they contain some truth. The question is, How much? I will briefly state my own belief in this particular, and the grounds upon which it is based.

I hold then that the accounts we have of the life of Jesus Christ, are *pervadingly* true, that we have in them the main substance, the principal facts of his history. In a few and by no means the most important particulars, there are errors, contradictions, misstatements. In one or two instances, ordinary events or striking coincidences of ordinary events are represented as extraordinary. There are traces in them of Jewish modes of thought and Jewish opinions. Still with all these abatements there is a substantial body of fact. And I learn from these records that there lived in Judea some eighteen hundred years ago, a personage in whose life and character the Divine wisdom and power, and love, were manifested as they have been manifested in no other mortal form, who was gifted with extraordi-

nary power, whereby by a simple act of his will he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and raised the dead, and rose himself from the grave, after having been crucified. I learn also many interesting particulars concerning the character of this wonderful individual, how he bore himself towards the poor and the sinful on the one hand, and the rich and honorable on the other, how he lived with his personal friends, and in all relations breathed a spirit of Godlike love, and walked among men like a very angel of Heaven, pouring out heavenly consolations, opening to human eyes the grandest views of the Providence of God, and kindling in the fainting, burthened heart of humanity the light of an undying hope. All this I believe is fully and may be most satisfactorily substantiated from the Gospels. I want no higher evidence than these furnish of these facts.

But it will be asked : What is the evidence which the Gospels furnish, beyond their bare assertion, of these facts? I answer, I find all the evidence I can possibly desire in the manner and form and air of these narratives. I do not know for instance, what the quality of honesty is, if that quality is not manifest, embedded in the whole tenor of these accounts. I am touched to the very heart by the singleness of mind which they so strikingly evince. They tell us of some remarkable event, and in the same breath, without any hesitation, they tell us that it was doubted and questioned by some of those who stood by and witnessed it. Of the most stupendous event in the whole history, the re-appearance of Jesus after his crucifixion, they relate that some, to whom he appeared, doubted whether it were he. And they give no explanation. I cannot resist the conviction that the authors of these histories had no earthly object but to tell the truth, whether it made for them or against them. There is no trace of any design to make out a case. And yet they do not seem to study honesty. They tell their story right on. This is one trait of these accounts, which admits of copious illustrations, and which any free-minded, truth-loving man, may verify for himself, but upon which I cannot enlarge now.



Another characteristic of the accounts of Christ is their consistency. On this point they seem to be utterly careless. They go on telling one thing after another, relating things concerning Jesus, which seem to be flatly inconsistent, but which upon further examination are found to be in perfect harmony. There is not a miracle, no, not a single miracle related in the New Testament, which so fills me with wonder as this one fact, that from these four accounts, brief sketches, disjointed as they are, bearing as they do so many traces of being the works of simple-minded, ignorant, prejudiced men, we can yet gather such a multitude of circumstances relating to Jesus that admit of being rounded into one beautiful whole, as natural as it is original ; so that the idea we obtain of the Man of Nazareth, is as complete and harmonious as one of those spheres rolling there in the heavens, and shaped into a perfect form by the hand of the Creator himself. If these narratives were mere fictions, fabrications of man, they would jangle and jar with each other in a thousand particulars. What but truth — who but God can make a story that shall harmonize with itself, and with all other truths, with all the other things of God ? I know very well that human genius has devised fictions that carry with them a wonderful air of truth. There is the celebrated Romance of Defoe's, known to all children. It is admirable and fascinating for the appearance of reality which it wears. But then the author, unquestioned as is his genius, had the scene all to himself, a desert island and one shipwrecked mariner, and he could invent circumstances to suit his purpose, and he sought to illustrate only the ordinary traits of an ingenious, stout-hearted man. But in this most wonderful of Books, the New Testament, we have a new and original person, a new specimen of humanity, such as the world had never witnessed, and his life passes in a crowd of men swayed to and fro by a host of conflicting prejudices and passions. His days are spent in the midst of a multitude of ever-varying and unexpected incidents. He comes in contact with the greatest diversities of character, and amidst all the changes of the scene, he is in perfect harmony with himself, and with the highest, and the profoundest truths

of things. I cannot—it is not in me to desire any more decisive evidence of the substantial reality of the things related in the four Gospels than is furnished by the beautiful and divine consistency of the life of Christ with itself and with all things.

Our friend, to whose opinions I alluded on the last Lord's day, while he has expressed strong doubts of the reality of nearly all the particulars related concerning Christ, confesses that there is a strong presumption that the loftiest sayings attributed to Jesus are genuine. Now what if it should appear that all the sayings, nay, all the acts as well as words ascribed to Jesus were, with very few exceptions indeed, of a truly lofty character, or were in perfect harmony with the unequalled elevation of his being? How then? Judged by this test, there is but very little, comparatively speaking, in the New Testament, that we cannot heartily believe. I do not mean to say that all that Jesus said or did was equally lofty, for that would hardly be natural. But I do mean that nearly everything that is recorded of Christ, bears the stamp of the same moral sublimity. And it is in the nature of the case that it should be so. The more ordinary circumstances of his life, his more common sayings, were not so likely to make an impression, not so likely to be remembered, as the loftiest of his words and deeds. And therefore, though the histories of his life are brief and imperfect, I do not believe that any very important event of his career, or any great saying of his has been omitted, or allowed to sink into oblivion. It is the manifest arrangement of nature, one of the decrees of God, that all great deeds and words should be perpetuated. Men are so constituted that they will not willingly let truth or goodness die. We are told that when Alexander the Great visited the tomb of the Grecian hero, whose exploits Homer had immortalized, the conqueror wished that he also might have such a poet to celebrate his renown. Idle was the wish. Do greatly, and thy deeds shall be sung. They will find their herald. Nay, as it has been well said, "great deeds will sing themselves." How clearly does

the history of Jesus illustrate this saying. He lived and led the life of a Son of God in the world, uttering words of immortal wisdom, doing the deeds of a celestial goodness, and though no poet was by, no cultivated men of genius, only poor, unlettered fishermen, men, who would have shrunk back with utter incredulity from the idea that they were destined to compose histories which should live through all time, and be read by a thousand kindreds, and tongues, and nations, yet the words and deeds of the man of Nazareth, fell into the hearts of those poor, ignorant men, and filled them as with the ravishing music of Heaven, and they could not but utter that music as they were able, and tell the divine story in their own rude way, and write it down in brief, uncultivated phrase. They could not keep silent. They opened their lips, and the glorious history of Jesus, in all its most important particulars burst forth upon the world. It sung—it is still singing itself. Happy the ears that catch the heavenly sound !

But how stands it, you will ask, with the miracles of Jesus ? Where is the evidence for the reality of those extraordinary events of his history, which are so obviously at variance with all our observation and experience ? My friends, I have maintained often, and do still maintain, that the same harmony, the same consistency which pervades the other portions of the Gospels, pervades the accounts which they contain of his miracles also. And the reason why this harmony is not perceived is apparent, I think, in the false, unphilosophical, and I may say, unscriptural idea or theory, which has been so vehemently insisted upon, of the nature and design of the extraordinary acts performed. It has been systematically and zealously taught that the miracles, in other words the wonders (for that is the whole meaning of the term miracle, a wonder,) it has been taught, I say, that the wonders of the life of Jesus were express violations of the laws and order of nature, taking place for the express purpose of revealing the interposition of God. Miracles, thus conceived of, are essentially incredible. What mortal man is acquainted with all the laws—with the whole order of Nature. And if we are ignorant on this point, as we



confessedly are, knowing but very little indeed of the laws of nature, how can we presume to say, that any event is a violation of these laws? It may vary widely from our experience. But is our experience commensurate with the whole order of nature? How do we know that it does not conform to laws, of which we have no knowledge? If we could only rid our minds entirely of the false theories concerning the nature of a miracle, which have so long and so widely prevailed, and come to the New Testament with a single desire to ascertain the facts therein related, we should see that the wonders of the life of Jesus, are living and inseparable parts of his history, that they belong to him, and harmonize with his whole being, as truly as do his words of forgiveness and mercy.

If there is a sound principle of thought and inquiry, it is that a new fact is not to be rejected simply because it is new and unprecedented, nor is it to be accounted an interruption of the laws of nature, but we are to take it for granted, that it is to be referred to some law, of which we have as yet no knowledge. This is the principle which is observed by all inquirers in the fields of science. They do not reject new facts because they are new, nor do they pronounce them violations of the laws of nature, because they contradict their experience. It is the mark of an uncultivated mind, that it rejects all facts, no matter how well authenticated, which do not accord with its own experience. A true philosophy teaches us to expect new and unprecedented facts in this great universe, where the circle of man's knowledge is so small; and the history of science is continually bringing us acquainted with new facts. What new glimpses are men obtaining of the wondrous relations of mind to mind, and of mind to matter! I say, therefore, that we are bound to come to the examination of the wonders of the life of Jesus, with no presumption against them, arising out of their novelty. Our sole business is to ascertain the facts, and we must endeavor to see whether they are in harmony with the character of Christ.

The Gospels, it is evident, represent Christ as possessed naturally of a wonder-working power. All that we have to determine is, Did he exercise this power in harmony with



all his own, and all the other powers of nature? Was the action of this power marked by the style, genius, spirit of nature and of God? But my meaning will be best shown by an example. Take the incident of the cure of the withered hand. Just consider the case. Jesus went into a synagogue, a Jewish place of worship—a Jewish church. The people crowded to see and hear him. There was a man present who had a withered hand. Jesus bade him stand forth. There was present, also, some of the higher class of the Jews, individuals who undertook to guide and rule in matters of religion. They were jealous of the power and popularity of this young Nazarene; and so blinded and depraved were they, that they watched Jesus to see if he would perform a cure on the Sabbath, and thus violate the sanctity of the day. To these individuals, who no doubt occupied a conspicuous place in the synagogue, Jesus turned and said, “Is it lawful to do well or to do ill on the Sabbath day—to save life or to kill?” Mark what a cutting force there was in this question. It is as if he had said, “Which is violating the Sabbath, you or I?—I who seek to do an act of mercy, or you who are cherishing an evil purpose? I, who would save life—or you, who would kill me?” They made no reply. How could they? And then, when Jesus had looked upon them with indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he said to the man, “Stretch forth thine hand.” And he stretched it forth, and it was made whole, as the other. And how could he help stretching it out? Just put yourself in the place of that man. Imagine yourself standing in so commanding a presence, with a gazing excited crowd around you; and the rich and honorable and great quailing before the eye and silenced by the words of the young peasant of Nazareth, and you will see how the inmost springs of your life must have been stirred; and how you would have been prompted to put forth new and unwonted power. I cannot but believe such an incident as this, it is so perfectly in harmony with the dignified character of Christ. It shows him to us in a characteristic and commanding attitude. It is not the physical effect which he wrought upon the man’s limb that excites my wonder, but it is his own imperial and

godlike air. This it is that reveals to me the Divinity that was in Jesus.

Thus the wonders of his life are valuable as they illustrate him ; as they show what manner of man he was. Strike them out of his history, and you lose the means of estimating the greatness of his spirit—the godlike power of his character. They are, as his acts, parts of him. And his individuality is mutilated, and all but lost, if these facts are rejected. But seen in them, and through them, he rises before us the loftiest of all the sons of God, the beloved of the Infinite Father, one with God, and the Revealer of everlasting Glory.

Thus, brethren and friends, may he be seen and known by us, and when thus known his memory will be an inexhaustible fountain of life, and light, and salvation.

14  
ANTI-SUPERNATURALISM.

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A

# SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

SENIOR CLASS OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

IN

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

JULY 13, 1845.

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By ANDREW P. PEABODY,

PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

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# SERMON.



JOHN III. 2.

“WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD ; FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM.”

OUR young brethren, now about to enter upon the Christian ministry, have been prepared for its peculiar duties by instructors whose experience in years and fruits so far exceeds my own, that I cannot enter on their departments with the hope of adding any thing essential to their teachings. It remains for me to choose some subject of general interest, and to offer such views in relation to it, as seem to me just, timely, and possessed of an important bearing upon the course of those who may become members of the clerical profession. I have therefore determined to call your attention to the anti-supernatural speculations, which have of late been thrust with great prominence before the public mind, and present questions, both of belief and practice, which the sooner the young minister answers and settles for himself, the better will it be for his peace and his usefulness.

The progress of skepticism as to the miraculous narratives of the New Testament has been very rapid. At first, it was only a modest inquiry, (which, perhaps, there was some reason for entertaining,) whether an inordinate stress had not been laid upon the external and miraculous evidences of Christianity, so as to deprive the internal of their due prominence and weight. “*Fugite hinc, latet anguis in herba,*” cried some of the voices to which we had been accustomed to listen with reverence.

But, sooner than any could have opined, the folds of the serpent were distinctly discernible. The miracles were proclaimed unessential and worthless, though they might be historically true, and not unnatural outflows from our Saviour's superior endowments. Then they were declared *myths*; and that word, the unscrupulous use of which is all that is needed to make a German critic, is, as every sciolist knows, simply an euphemism for *falsehood*. And now, not only is the actual occurrence of these miracles denied, but it is affirmed that it is not within the possible scope of human testimony to authenticate a miracle, so that the Deity is for ever cut off from this avenue of communication with mankind. These speculations have not, indeed, startled us by their novelty, nor yet by the freshness of the arguments adduced to sustain them, or of the yet more potent sneers that have given them a lodgment in many minds that know not the difference between reasoning and scoffing. Woolston, Tindal, and Hume had long ago exhausted the armory of anti-supernatural logic, while Voltaire had fully tested the poignancy of delicate innuendo, and Paine the power of coarse and foul gibes and jeers, against those venerable workings of omnipotence on which the faith of the Church has always reposed. But opinions of this class were formerly advocated by those who professed themselves at variance or hostility with the Christian Church; their promulgation by persons claiming full ecclesiastical standing is the peculiar feature of our own times.

The validity and worth of the miracles of the New Testament are denied on philosophical, spiritual, and practical grounds. The anti-supernatural theory of religion is defended as based on a sounder philosophy, as cherishing a higher spirituality of character, and as better adapted to the necessities of the human soul, than the theory which admits miraculous evidence. I invite you, therefore, to the comparison of these theories in a philosophical, spiritual, and practical point of view.

I. The anti-supernatural theory is based on a false philosophy of the human mind, inasmuch as it exaggerates the scope and sphere of individual consciousness. It relies on the intuitive perception of truth. What, then, are our intuitions? They

are separate items of consciousness, and nothing more. They are subjective, not objective. They can go no further than consciousness goes ; and consciousness cannot transcend our own personal condition or experience. Consciousness has no future ; nor can it extend to beings or objects beyond ourselves. I cannot be conscious of the existence or attributes of God, nor of the natures and necessities of my fellow-beings, nor of my own future immortality. On these subjects I may, indeed, have my opinions ; and if these opinions, instead of being grounded on a careful induction, are hasty and ill-digested, I shall be likely to dignify them with the name of intuitions, and to deem them infallible. The term *intuitive* is commonly given to such convictions as are not based on any remembered process of reasoning. In this case the conviction is its own only evidence. The ground of belief might be thus expressed : — “ I believe this proposition, because I believe it.” But my neighbour may believe a proposition the opposite of that which I believe, and on the same evidence which I have, namely, a conviction, of which he cannot trace the history ; and, if my opinion must needs be true, his is also true. There is, then, no such thing as absolute truth. All truth is relative, — subjective. Being believed without external evidence is the only condition of truth. But, if there be no such thing as absolute truth, then is there no such being as a personal and immutable Deity ; for, if there be a God other than the Proteus of a pantheistic fancy, in him there must be absolute, eternal truth.

But it is maintained that there is a certain prolonged intuition, a chronic perception of truth, which cannot be mistaken or deluded. A man can have, it is said, no proof equal to that of his own experience. If he has lived for months or years in the habitual contemplation of certain propositions, if he has tested them in practice, if they have sufficed for his moral wants, if they have been as a heavenly manna to his soul, if they have become digested, assimilated, incorporated into his very being, so as to constitute an essential part of his consciousness, there surely can be, it is said, no remaining doubt as to their truth, — he has in their behalf an evidence as incontrovertible as mathe-

matical demonstration. I reply, that these facts in a man's experience prove nothing beyond themselves. Certain propositions may meet a man's moral wants ; and yet the question will remain open, whether those wants are native or adventitious. They may be verified in his experience ; but who shall say whether his experience has been what it ought to be ? They may satisfy the conditions of the highest happiness of which he knows ; but can he affirm with certainty that this is the highest, or most genuine, or most permanent mode of happiness possible ? This argument from experience, that is, from prolonged intuition, is adduced in behalf of any and every form of belief, misbelief, and unbelief. I could adduce it, did I deem it valid, in favor of the miracles of the New Testament. I know not how to dispense with them. I have felt their power. They have entered into the happiest experience of my life. They are to me, not mere outward facts of history, but voices of the Almighty sent forth never to return, and vibrating in my heart as distinctly at the present moment as are my words in your ears. But when I would urge this experience of my own, I am reminded of my sojourn a few years ago in a Shaker village, and of a venerable disciple of Mother Ann Lee, whose air and manner reminded me of that holy widow of old, who departed not from the temple, and made her life an unceasing liturgy of devotion. This good woman, with whom an hour's interview was a season of privilege never to be forgotten, said to me, with regard to the wild and absurd creed of her sect : — " It is all true ; for every word of it is written in my heart. I have felt and experienced the whole of it. A sign from heaven could not increase my faith. I have lived in these principles for sixty years ; and, now that I am just stepping into the grave, they give me peace and joy unspeakable, and my heaven has already begun." All reasoning as to absolute truth from intuition (or from experience, which is the same thing) is vitiated by the consideration, that we know not with certainty the origin or history of any alleged intuition, — we know not whether it is native or derived, from within or from without, suggested by our experience, assumed as its exponent, or adopted as its guide.



Is it now asked whether I place no reliance on the testimony of consciousness and experience ? I reply, that I place great reliance upon it. The truth is not ours, until it is reproduced in our consciousness and verified in our experience. Yet I have so often been sure that I was in the right where I have subsequently found myself in error, that I cannot but regard my sincerest convictions as of themselves attended with a degree of doubt, and I feel the need of another witness to confirm them. I need not only the testimony of my own spirit, but also the concurrent extrinsic testimony of the Almighty, in some authentic form. Thus by the mouth of the two witnesses is every word established.

I next remark, that, even were our intuitions entirely trustworthy so far as they can extend, religious truth covers a much wider ground, and a ground which they can never occupy. Religion is a relative term. It implies the science of relations in the spiritual universe. It includes, not only the condition and laws of one's own soul, but also his relation to other beings, and thus their nature, laws, and history. It embraces, not only the past and present, but the unbounded future, and points out the path of the soul for unending ages. Now, as to this vast range of subjects, as I have already remarked, consciousness fails, intuition ceases ; and yet acquaintance with them is of infinite moment.

No question equals in importance that of immortality. It connects itself with every portion of the life that now is. The answer given to it defines the path of interest and duty for each passing day, nay, determines the law of our nature. If we are wholly mortal, it is our interest and our duty to seize the nearest and enjoy the cheapest pleasures, to crown ourselves with rose-buds before they be withered, and to let no flower of the spring pass by us, — instead of sowing in toil and pain the seeds of high mental and moral culture, from which we may not live to reap a harvest. Such is the law of an earth-bounded nature. And how are we to know whether ours be earth-bounded or not ? We may surmise, conjecture, hope. We may draw faint analogies, and the first skeptic that we meet may offset them by

analogies of an opposite bearing. But consciousness is voiceless ; experience is voiceless ; of the hundreds that have gone from our sides, none have returned to show the spirit's path, or to shed light on the valley of death. But when we see the soul, at the Saviour's word, returning to the lifeless and entombed body, — when we hear from him, that those whom we call dead live unto God, and shall die no more, — when we stand in faith by his deserted sepulchre, and behold the rock rolled back by no mortal hand, and, as we turn away in amazement, meet in the garden the same Jesus whom we had seen dead upon the cross, and the voice, whose expiring cry yet rings in our ears, says to us, “ Because I live, ye shall live also,” — then, and not till then, do we know that man cannot die. By no other voice is the veil of death rent ; by no other arm is the shadow of the grave rolled away.

Were it not for the confidence with which so many youths and maidens profess, unaided by special revelation, to thread the mysteries of the divine nature, I should be disposed to ask, with the self-distrust of the old patriarch, “ Who can, by searching, find out God ? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection ? ” When I consider my own narrow range of vision, and the vastness of the universe which he pervades and fills, — when I remember that I am but of yesterday, and that he knew no beginning, — when I recoil, baffled in the attempt to grasp the complex relations which he harmonizes, — when I see the giant forms of physical and moral evil, which no logic of mine can classify under the system of universal benevolence, I feel that my own consciousness can guide me but a little way in my knowledge of God, — that his ways are indeed higher than mine, and his thoughts than mine. There are numerous problems, with regard to his administration, which I know not how to solve. Is his providence merely general ; or is it minute and paternal ? Am I part and parcel of the vast machinery of nature, and liable to be crushed by the next roll of the wheel ; or am I, in my littleness and low estate, the distinct object of his interest and care ? How far extends the reign of evil ? What is its office in the divine economy ? Where are its limits ? Where and how do jus-

tice and mercy blend in the divine government ? Is there forgiveness for sin ? If so, to what extent, and on what conditions ? The answers to these questions form a part of God's consciousness, not of mine ; and I know not how they are to be answered, but by a special revelation from God, authenticated by express miracle, — a seal which God alone can affix to the communication of truth. They are answered in the New Testament, and the answers there given, the devout heart accepts and adopts with gratitude. But there might have been given other answers, which no intuitive perceptions of our own would have enabled us to gainsay. Other answers were given, before Christ came, by priests and prophets ; and the human mind acquiesced in them, because by its own unaided resources it could attain nothing truer or better.

These illustrations may suffice to show the exaggerated view which the anti-supernatural theory takes of the province of consciousness. It confounds the subjective with the objective, — ideas, opinions, or impressions of doubtful origin with absolute truth.

Before leaving this topic, I wish to offer a few remarks with regard to innate ideas, considered as a source of knowledge. On this subject there is a great deal of confused thought and illogical writing. Innate ideas are not knowledge, but the capacity of knowledge. They are the instruments by which the soul apprehends and shapes truths and facts, whether in the physical or the spiritual universe. Thus, the innate ideas of space and time, number and figure, do not include or imply any knowledge of outward objects or events ; but they enable the mind to become acquainted with the visible creation, to comprehend its forms, and to mark the sequence of its phenomena. The case is the same with those innate ideas which characterize man as a religious being. The idea of causation is something very different from the recognition of a supreme first-cause, and may satisfy itself with the belief of a multitude of finite causes, or of the sequence of cause and effect through a past eternity. The idea of infinity does not define to the soul a personal Deity possessed of every possible perfection ; but

enables and predisposes the soul to grasp the largest and loftiest conception of the divine nature that is presented to it, whether that conception be polytheistic, pantheistic, or monotheistic. The ideas of right and wrong are not an instinctive perception of the moral qualities of actions ; but they enable man to learn these qualities, and dispose him to recognize them in the conduct of life.

But, while I regard innate ideas not as knowledge, but as means of knowledge, let it not be supposed that I recognize no sources of religious knowledge other than the Bible. I acknowledge God's elder scriptures as a divine revelation. There is much religious truth written on the forms, and made known in the events, of the outward universe. Many beings and objects have their laws and relations engraved upon them so manifestly and so clearly, that a verbal revelation concerning them would be superfluous. But it is admitted on all hands, that there are many departments of truth, on which the outward universe can give us no instruction ; and my object has been to show you, that, in these departments, we cannot rely on our own intuition or experience, but need an express revelation.

Another philosophical error, into which the anti-supernaturalists have fallen, consists in the inference drawn by them from a distinction, which they claim and we admit, between truths and facts. Facts, it is said, are finite, — they are within the range of human observation and experience ; we may, therefore, receive them on human testimony, — they may be transmitted in records, and conveyed from man to man, and from generation to generation. But truth, we are told, is infinite, and the infinite God alone can bear testimony to it ; man cannot teach it, or attest it, — ancient records cannot transmit it ; it can only be written on the individual soul by the finger of God. The distinction is a just one, but does not bear the inference drawn from it to the discredit of a written revelation. Facts are particular truths ; truths are general facts, — God's facts, such facts as are always present to the all-embracing mind. Facts are to truths what parts are to the whole. Of facts only can we acquire or impart knowledge through our own intuition, observa-



tion, or experience. We have no right, on our own, or on any human authority, to enunciate absolute and universal truths ; for, however undeniable any given proposition may be, within the range of our own consciousness or experience, we know not but that beyond this range it encounters exceptions and modifications, so as to make it a fact, and not a truth. Truth cannot, then, be authenticated by individual consciousness or experience, which is limited and subjective ; while truth is universal, and has an objective reality, independently of the finite mind that contemplates it. Truth needs extrinsic testimony from God, — testimony in some other form than that of consciousness. It cannot, indeed, be authenticated by human testimony. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are, I admit, no more trustworthy witnesses to absolute truth than you or I. But miracles are facts ; and, as such, may be substantiated by human testimony. They are facts of a peculiar kind. They are tantamount to the voice of God. Their purport is :—“ The mighty God, Jehovah, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.” They introduce the Almighty as our witness for whatever disclosures they cover. They place us in immediate communion with the divine mind. The words which they authenticate are the words, not of man, but of God. Nor is there any other conceivable mode in which universal truths can be announced to man, with sufficient evidence, under the existing laws of his being.

Another philosophical error of the anti-supernaturalists consists in their pressing analogy too far. While they cannot admit the testimony of ancient records, they seek to reinforce consciousness and experience by appealing to the analogy of the outward universe. This they are especially fond of doing on the subject of the future life. Those, who scout the venerable miracle of the Saviour’s resurrection, will bid us read man’s immortality in the transformation of the earthworm through death into a higher mode of life, — in the forthputting of the foliage, and the upspringing of the grass after a winter’s death, — in the reappearance of the dead, decomposed kernel of wheat in the living blade, ear, and sheaf. These analogies were before the

eyes of the good men and holy women that presided over our Lord's interment. It was in the full glory of an Asiatic spring that they laid him in the tomb ; and his tomb was in a garden, surrounded by these speaking emblems of immortality. Why did not every green leaf and opening bud say to them, " He, whom ye bury, will live again ? " And, to make the question more comprehensive, let me ask, why were not these analogies observed or thought out by those who, in earlier times and in Pagan countries, reasoned wisely and well of nature and of life ? They were not. At least, I have never met with them. The great aim of the ancients, when they reason of immortality, is to establish by the most flimsy sophistry the preëxistence and past eternity of the soul, and thence to deduce its future eternity. And why ? Simply because analogy proves nothing. Analogy is a similarity of laws or relations between objects of different classes ; and to reason from analogy is to infer resemblances of which we are ignorant from those which we know. But we can never do this with certainty, nor even with a high degree of probability, when the objects compared are of widely different classes ; for there must be some point where resemblance ceases and difference begins, and there is always room for the suspicion that this point lies between the resemblance which we know and that which we infer. Thus, the kernel of wheat, the caterpillar, and man are beings of widely different classes. They resemble each other in being creatures of God, and organized existences. But they are so unlike in their modes, both of life and of death, as to leave no ground for the inference, that, because something like a resurrection takes place in the case of the kernel and the caterpillar, man will also rise.

The true office of analogy is to answer objections to truths ascertained from other sources, — to remove a seeming improbability from what at first sight appears strange, though proved to be true. It is no longer strange, if we can show that the very law or principle, which constituted its seeming strangeness, has its well known applications within the range of familiar facts or phenomena. Thus, the doctrine of the resurrection and eternal life, if true, is a stupendous and amazing truth ; and, when man

is first assured of it by miraculous revelation from God, it seems to him too wonderful to be believed, and he looks around through the universe in a state of partial incredulity, and asks, Is there any thing like a resurrection in any of the departments of nature with which I am conversant? He sees that there is. He sees the butterfly come forth from his rent sepulchre, — the green blade from the grave where the sower hid the seed. He sees that all nature dies and lives again. His skepticism as to what God has revealed concerning his own resurrection is thus removed, and he is prepared to receive the stupendous revelation with an earnest and loving faith. This, you will remember, is the use which St. Paul makes of the argument from analogy, in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He proves man's immortality from Christ's resurrection, represents the two as inseparable, and denies the possibility of teaching or believing that man will rise, if Christ has not risen. But then suggests itself the skeptical inquiry, "How can this be? How can the dead be raised, and with what bodies?" And, to ward off this, he shows that in the outward universe there are well-known instances of the resurrection of virtually the same being in a different form, — as in the case of the kernel of wheat, which, without losing its identity, reappears in a different form from that in which it was thrown into the ground. He thus removes skepticism as to man's resurrection on the ground of its strangeness and its incomprehensibility, by showing that there is in the annual course of nature a familiar fact, multiplied myriads of times, which is in itself equally strange and incomprehensible. We see, then, that the argument from analogy can bear no strain, that it has no independent value, that it is in its very nature ancillary to positive proof, and that it therefore finds its true place and office only in that theory of religion which recognizes a special miraculous revelation.

Such are some of the philosophical errors of the anti-supernaturalists.

II. They also claim for their system superior spirituality. Let us, then, consider the two theories in their spiritual aspects and relations.

According to the anti-supernatural theory, the outward universe is a vast and magnificent piece of mechanism, wound up and put in motion unknown ages ago, moved by invariable laws, arbitrary, constraining, mechanical in all its arrangements, with no power of adaptation to the constantly varying wants or to the most decisive emergencies of the human family. Nature sits close and dark around the soul of man, and there is no break through which we can look behind and beyond, catch the glance of the Father's eye, and behold the guiding arm. The uninterrupted sequence of outward events, the unbroken chain of physical cause and effect, makes the external world wholly material, divests it of all spiritual associations and uses, and renders it no longer the shrine of a still working and ever working Deity. It is therefore to be despised, subdued, trodden under foot by the man of high spiritual attainments. Hence the ascetic moral maxims which in many quarters blend themselves with the anti-supernatural theology. Hence, also, the rigid practical asceticism, which not a few, who believe in no inspiration higher than their own, have had the nerve to carry out. Entire independence of a mechanical, unyielding, inexorable system of nature is their acme of spirituality ; yet, in itself, a low attainment ; for he who despises and abjures the world does little, compared with him who ascertains, unfolds, and enjoys its spiritual uses, and converts all things outward into ministers of God for his progress in truth and holiness.

Far otherwise is it with the supernatural theory. This brings the physical universe into the circle of higher, spiritual harmonies. Its mechanism, though perfect, is not absolute. Its laws bend to man's necessities. The wheels are, indeed, there ; but, as in Ezekiel's vision, there is a living spirit in the wheels, and whithersoever the spirit goes there the wheels go. The miracles of Jesus have laid bare the springs of nature, and uncovered her foundations. Her kingdom has been shaken, that its essential laws may be made manifest. Through these amazing works of divine power, we look beneath the surface, we see the controlling arm of omnipotence, and enter into communion with the infinite spirit. We see that the established order of events is a



means, not an end, — varied in former times for the welfare of the spiritual universe, and therefore in itself flexible, subservient to spiritual laws and uses, and ordained for the nurture and progress of the souls subjected to its discipline. These miracles authorize an implicit faith in Providence. The same hand, that through Jesus visibly arrested the common course of events, must still govern and modify that course by the invisible shaping of remoter causes. Thus the distinct agency of the Almighty is traced in every outward scene and event, and nature becomes one vast presence-chamber of the Eternal. He who takes this view is not called upon to renounce the world, but, what is higher and better, to use it.

I would farther remark, that the enlarged scientific knowledge of the present day creates a spiritual need of miracles, — of special divine manifestations and communications. Had we as narrow a horizon as the ancients had, did we know no world but our own, and were we acquainted with but a small portion even of this, we might deem ourselves significant portions of the great whole, and undoubtedly distinct objects of the love and care of the Supreme Creator, occupying a place near the very centre of the universe. But modern science throws us back from the centre to the remote circumference. It makes us feel our littleness and lowliness. Unnumbered worlds and systems move at the Creator's bidding, and are encircled by his vast embrace. Should our planet, our whole system, vanish, to the orbs in the distance it would be simply the ceasing of the faint twinkling of a luminous point in their firmament; and the visible universe would lose in splendor what the verdant forest loses by the fall of a single leaf. How, then, can we flatter ourselves that the Infinite One regards us individually with interest, numbers our steps, and watches for our souls? On a clear starry night, can we see the rushing of that stream of life and light from the remotest bounds of creation, and feel ourselves but wavelets in the unknown sea, without a shuddering dread and awe? The vastness of creation, the infinity of the divine presence, is of itself oppressive and insupportable, and would constrain us to repeat in doubt and despair the Psalmist's words of astonishment and humble

gratitude, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" How can we hope that he who guides these uncounted worlds will mark the falling tear, and listen to the prayer of the desolate? The more we learn of the immensity of the outward universe, the more do our souls crave a voice to break the eternal silence, and to give us the assurance, — which miracle, express revelation alone, can give, — that he who fills and bounds immensity is our father and our friend. We need prophecy, and sign, and wonder, — reiterated attestations under his own infallible seal, — to assure us that we are not forgotten, that our interests are his care, and our souls in his keeping.

Yet more, aside from their worth as attestations of the truth, these miracles of our Saviour are of infinite moment as in themselves revelations of the spiritual world. They roll back the veil of sense and the shadow of the grave. They give us glimpses of that vast spiritual creation which surrounds, pervades, embosoms the material. When Elisha was in peril, and his timid servant thought that there was neither help nor hope, the prophet prayed, and said, "Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see"; and he saw the hosts of heaven arrayed for his master's defence. The miracles of Jesus in like manner open our eyes to spiritual laws and harmonies, which else would have been sealed to the earth-bound vision. When he heals disease by a word, he makes manifest the arm of power and love which sustains and heals every human sufferer. When he restores the young maiden to her parents, and summons Lazarus back to the embrace of his sisters, he reveals to human view the continued life and surviving love of the departed. When heavenly hosts chant his birth-song, when Moses and Elijah talk with him on the mountain, when angels attend his steps and guard his sepulchre, there is laid open to mortal sight the state of things that always exists around us. We see in these events, that heaven is not afar off, but unspeakably near, compassing our homes, encircling our daily ways, — that, as around us in leaves and dew-drops on a summer's day there are myriads of living beings too minute for the bodily eye to discern, so there is constantly about us a cloud of unseen spiritual witnesses too

ethereal for our gross vision. Indeed, the whole tendency of the miraculous portions of our Saviour's life is to bring the two worlds together, and to make us feel that they are as one world, — that our departed friends, and the wise and holy of all times, may be to us as guardian angels, — that

“The saints on earth and those above  
But one communion make.”

Thus, on spiritual grounds, does the supernatural theory claim our decided preference.

III. It remains for me to speak briefly of the two theories in a practical point of view. It is claimed in behalf of the anti-supernatural theory, that it is better adapted to the great mass of mankind, — that the multitude are more likely to be disciples of a religion which is its own evidence, than of one which rests on miraculous proof, — that men in general reluct from authority, and desire and need no mediator between their own souls and God. Now the independent religion of the soul had its free chance for the first four thousand years of the world's history, with no rival system of supernaturalism (beyond the narrow limits of Judea) which could take or keep lodgment in any reflecting mind. But with what results? Did the multitude press to the light, and rejoice in the truth? Did the soul find out God, and duty, and immortality? Did the light that lighteneth every man vindicate its own sufficiency? The very question bears absurdity on its face. To take the one essential doctrine of eternal life, let me ask, where, from the beginning of time to the present age, can you find an instance of firm, sufficient, satisfying faith in immortality, apart from faith in a miraculous revelation? I know not. The dying Socrates (if his death-scene be rightly reported) makes the nearest approach to it; but there is a heaven-wide difference between his death-scene and that of the Christian. “I have strong hope,” said he, “that I am now going to the company of good men; but, on a matter encompassed with so much doubt, it becomes us not to be too confident.” What a contrast to the full, clear, sight-like faith of him, who reposes on his Saviour's resurrec-

tion, and whose whole soul goes forth in the glad declaration, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that his disciple cannot die!" To prove that annihilation is no evil is the object of full one half of Cicero's celebrated treatise on the Contempt of Death (not on Immortality, as it is currently termed, for immortality is represented simply as a possible alternative). Seneca, also, who writes more largely than any other of the ancients on the contempt of death, manifestly inclines to the belief that death is the end of all things. Nor have I ever read, heard, or known of a disbeliever in miracle and revelation, who had a sufficiently strong faith in immortality to meet death with entire self-consciousness and in a state of perfect peace and undoubting hope. On the other hand, the multitude, which none can number, of faithful lives and happy death-beds among the unlearned and the lowly, whose religion was based on authority and miracle, amply rebuts the insinuation, that such a religion is not for the many.

If authority be excluded from religion, and every soul be left to light its own torch, it is self-evident that only here and there one can attain to the knowledge of the truth. In order for the soul to arrive at a clear vision of God, of duty, and of its own inner being, its powers must be harmoniously developed, its perceptions undimmed by prejudice, unclouded by appetite or passion. The birth-signature of the divine image must have been kept pure and bright; for only the pure in heart can see God. Where, then, is the sinner? What door of return is open to him? He can know the truth only from the light which he has quenched, — from the experience which he has precluded. But Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He, in the marvellous facts of his history, furnishes objects of faith, on which the darkened mind, the degraded soul, can lay hold and sustain itself, till it has rekindled the light within, and acquired that happy experience, which, in due time, will make the gospel its own evidence.

The practical worth of a religion based on miracle and authority will still farther appear, when we reflect on those emergencies of intense trial and sorrow, during which we most deeply need the power of religious faith. These are not times when the



mental faculties are in full clearness and activity. When the mind is overwhelmed by sudden bereavement, or intent on the passing death-scene of one tenderly beloved, or distracted by the pains and infirmities of acute or fatal illness, its own strength is weakness, the inward eye grows dim, and the soul needs something beyond and above itself, on which to fix its bewildered gaze, till it can recover clearness and steadiness of vision. But at such a season, while even distinct self-consciousness seems suspended, the soul can look to the Saviour's deserted sepulchre, can see the burial garments drop from his reanimated form, and can hear, as from the very lips of the Redeemer, as the angel rolls the stone away, "He that believeth in me, though dead, shall live." I visit the widow bereft of her only son, faithful, kind, devoted, beloved of God and man. With what words shall I comfort that forlorn mother? Shall I babble to her of flowers and butterflies? Or shall I discourse to her of the laws of spirit, and attempt a labored proof of immortality on grounds which her lacerated mind can neither apprehend nor follow? Or shall I tell her to look within, in stern, defiant self-reliance, for her faith and her support, when her stricken and desolate spirit feels more than ever its neediness and its dependence? O, no! All this would be but wanton mockery of her grief. But I can tell her of the widow of Nain, and who stopped the bier. I can talk to her of the new tomb in Joseph's garden, and of the vision of angels on the resurrection morning. And, while the (so called) Christian minister can exclaim in derision, "Believe all this who can," I know that my words will not seem to her as idle tales, but the power of God and the wisdom of God for her relief and consolation.

Let me here remark, that, in these seasons of intense need, minds are to a great degree equalized. The strongest mind, undisciplined by faith, and inured to a godless self-dependence, finds itself weak, while the loftiest and richest intellect in the school of Christ stoops to look into "the place where the Lord lay," and yields itself to the guidance of humble, childlike trust. At such times, we all crave assurances of immortality congenial to the passing scene, covering the same ground, woven (so to

speak) of the same material. We demand to see actual instances of resurrection in a body like our own, — death visibly “swallowed up of life.” I am glad to find in the biography of the late Dr. Arnold, whom none will readily charge either with weakness or superstition, his distinct testimony to the adaptation of our Saviour’s resurrection to his own moral nature and necessities. Speaking of a then recent death in his family, he said : — “Nothing afforded us such comfort, when shrinking from the outward accompaniments of death, the grave, the grave-clothes, the loneliness, as the thought that all these had been around our Lord himself, round him who died and is now alive for evermore.”

I have thus exhibited the advantages of the supernatural over the anti-supernatural theory of religion, in a philosophical, spiritual, and practical point of view. I do not regard my discourse as in any sense or degree an argument for the authenticity of the miraculous portions of the New Testament history. Such an argument is needless. In the great and enduring works on the evidences of Christianity, the proof that the gospel narrative as a whole is genuine and true has been so written, that none attempt to refute it ; while every objection, of which such works could take cognizance, has been made null and void. But many minds have *a priori* difficulties, which preclude their approach to the question of the authenticity of the sacred records. Such difficulties the considerations that have now been presented are designed to obviate. They are adapted, as it seems to me, to present the Christian miracles as in themselves credible, and thus to prepare the mind for the candid appreciation of the evidence on which they rest.

The two theories of religion of which I have now spoken are at utter variance with each other. They stand not on common ground, as do the rival systems of sects that recognize the authority of the written word. They rest on separate foundations. Let not the difference be regarded as unessential by those who profess to believe in Christianity as a positive and miraculous revelation. True it is, that we may enjoy the con-

solutions and hopes of the gospel, without consciously recurring to its miraculous evidences. And, in like manner, when a tempest rages out of doors, we may gratefully avail ourselves of the shelter of our tight and warm dwellings, without thinking particularly of the underpinnings of our houses. But still these underpinnings are tacitly recognized in all our self-congratulatory and thankful thoughts ; for, if we knew, when the tempest came, that they were frail or defective, no possible appliance of domestic comfort could dispel our anxiety and trepidation. Thus, while miraculous evidence lies calmly at the basis of the Christian temple, and this “foundation of God standeth sure,” it may not always be consciously present to our thoughts, while we scale the battlements of the temple, and mount its turrets reaching to the clouds. But let the foundation be taken away, and we should at once own its worth and feel its loss. We should no longer dare to mount ; we should distrust every floor, and wall, and staircase ; and should soon leave the precincts of the temple for the desolate earth and the stormy sky of infidelity.

The discussion into which I have led you has an important bearing on the question, now much mooted, of the interchange of acts of Christian fellowship between those religious teachers who believe and those who reject our Saviour’s miracles. There are, in fact, two entirely distinct questions, the blending of which produces much of the confusion of thought and speech, and incoherency of conduct, that prevail on this subject. One question is, whether those who take opposite views of the authenticity of the Christian miracles shall recognize each other as good men ; and the other, whether they shall give each other countenance as Christian teachers. The former question I am prepared to answer with a cordial *Yes* ; the latter with an unhesitating and unqualified *No*. Whatever a man may believe or disbelieve, I am bound to regard and treat him as a good man, if he lead a pure, upright, and benevolent life. This a disciple of Confucius or of Mahomet may do ; much more one whose character has been developed under Christian influences.

And if a man be sincere and honest in his rejection of important portions of our Saviour's doctrines and history, and at the same time have much of his spirit, I cannot for a moment doubt his final acceptance with Christ. But those religious teachers, who receive the history of the New Testament as authentic, are preachers of the Christ of that history, — of the Christ, who wrought wonders, uttered prophecies, and rose miraculously from the dead, who was lifted above all power of error, and knew no sin. The Christ of the other party is an amiable, enthusiastic, Jewish youth, of like passions with other men, sometimes erring, not wholly without blame, either self-deluded in the belief of his own miraculous powers, or willing to encourage such a baseless belief in his followers that they might the more readily receive his doctrines, and uttering, (unless grossly misrepresented,) a great deal of senseless and bombastic rodomontade about these works, which he never wrought. Now are not these two conceptions too far apart for a preacher of either to be able to do justice to the other? Must not each, if honest, in the other's pulpit, undo the other's work, so that mutual neutralization, and not edification or progress, would be the result of these clashing ministries? Especially would this be the case, inasmuch as not only the conceptions, but the professed chief aims, of the two are diametrically opposed to each other. The one makes it the great end of his ministry to sustain and enforce the plenary authority of Christ as a religious teacher; the other, to emancipate his hearers from all authority but that of their own intuitions and experience. Both of these teachers cannot be doing God's work. One of them must have his face set directly against the truth. And for what conceivable purpose either can wish to give currency to the teachings of the other, is an inquiry, which I have in vain sought to have answered.

I am astonished that those, who reject the miracles of the New Testament, do not assume an exclusive ground as to the offices of religious instruction. To them these miracles are anile stories, worthy only of ridicule, and the chief support of a radically false and injurious theology. Why, then, should they invite teachers of a different class to tell these stories



over again in their pulpits, and to hold up themselves and the old wives' fables which they cannot help believing to the derision of enlightened and emancipated congregations? Is not this mere child's play, utterly unworthy of grown men, not to say of the teachers of religion? Suppose a parallel case. If the anti-supernaturalists be in the right, they occupy, with reference to the Christian world in general, the same position which the apostles and primitive Christians occupied with reference to the pagans of their day. Their mission is to scourge away the accumulated superstitions of ages. Now suppose that there had been chairs of religious instruction in the different temples at Athens, here one devoted to the marvellous birth, the wisdom, and the prowess of Minerva, there one consecrated to the loves of the sea-born Venus, and in the next street one established to commemorate the labors of Hercules; and imagine St. Paul in quiet possession of some portico or upper room, where he drew together the increasing ranks of his converts. Then imagine St. Paul sending proposals for an interchange of the offices of public religious instruction to these very men, whose idols he was striving to cast down, and of whose absurdities he was seeking to disabuse the general mind. Suppose the request denied, as it would of course have been; and imagine him to have given expression to his sense of injury in some such form as this:—"These men are harsh, unkind, inconsistent, in not permitting me to teach their usual hearers. They interchange services with each other, and are often seen in each other's places of audience, though all the world knows that they do not fully agree in sentiment, but that in the mind of each the objects of religious faith have a distinct and peculiar proportion and grouping. But as for me, I believe, as they do, in the One, the Many, and the All. I believe in absolute truth. I take my stand on absolute religion, of which the worship of Jehovah, that of Minerva, and that of Isis, are only separate forms or incarnations. To be sure, I do not believe that Minerva sprang full-grown and ready-armed from Jupiter's brain; but then I have no doubt that she was a woman of singular wisdom and energy. I cannot, indeed, find sufficient evidence that Venus

was born of the foam of the sea, or was ever drawn through the air by doves ; but there was, I doubt not, a woman of that name, exceedingly beautiful, fickle as the crest of a billow, graceful as the flight of doves. And as for Hercules, while there is a great deal of absurd fable about his history, I entertain no question that a very strong man of that name once lived. Now I can, in these temples, give my conceptions of these personages, which all must needs admit to be true as far as they go ; and I am willing, nay, desirous, that my stated hearers should be ever and anon refreshed with a new dispensation of idolatry." Had St. Paul enacted such a farce as this, where would now have been his memory, or who would be found to cherish it ? We honor him, because, believing that an idol was nought, and that, while there were " gods many and lords many," to him there was but " one God and one Lord," he made no covenant with idolatry, sought no compromise with false religion, but fearlessly proclaimed a faith which made all things new.

Now the anti-supernaturalists of the present day are essentially an iconoclastic party ; and, as reformers, they have no right to enter into parley and compromise with us idolaters. If they are in the right, we are holding the public mind in bondage to degrading and injurious superstitions. Let them treat us as honest men ; for we are honest and sincere, — we defend views, which are to our own souls of vital interest, worth, and power. But let them not countenance or sustain us as religious teachers. And we, in our turn, will deem them honest, consistent men, to be respected in their difference from us, and on no account to be defrauded of their good name for trueheartedness, moral courage, and personal excellence. But far different must be our verdict with regard to them, when they one moment stigmatize us as hypocrites and knaves, and the next, complain that they are not permitted to interchange the most sacred of religious offices with these same hypocrites and knaves.

Is it said, that, by taking exclusive ground with reference to ministerial exchanges, we violate the fundamental principles of religious freedom, on which liberal Christians have always stood ?

I would reply, first, that, however wide should be the limits of religious recognition, it is by no means certain that the interchange of pulpit services is the proper mode of recognition. On the other hand, while local considerations may sometimes render it expedient that clergymen of different denominations should occupy each other's pulpits, it is undoubtedly most conducive to the edification and progress of a congregation, that it should not be subjected to varying modes of administration, and blown about by conflicting winds of doctrine, but should enjoy, for the most part, the services of those who entertain similar views of truth, and employ similar modes of presenting those views.

With reference to the principles of religious freedom, it must be confessed that there was, in the infancy of our denomination, a great deal of loose and inaccurate speech and writing. Liberty was regarded as an end rather than a means, and was sought and prized for its own sake, rather than for its ministry in the attainment of higher good. Then, too, the exigencies of the times made it necessary to defend liberty from encroachments on the one side, but not to guard it against licentiousness on the other. There were then none in our own country, claiming to be called Christians, who denied the substantial truth of the evangelical narratives. Nor could the pioneers in the promulgation of liberal Christianity have had in view the probable upspringing of such a party as the anti-supernaturalists of the present day.

But the true question is, not what those who have gone before us have said or written, but what is right and just. Denominations do themselves great wrong in their prevalent unwillingness to recede from ground once taken. We, as a body, have, however, always acknowledged our own fallibility, both individually and collectively. Let, then, every new case of Christian ethics be decided, not by the warping of former precedents, but by fresh appeals to reason, conscience, and the word of God.

But I have already exceeded the proper limits of a discourse, and must close. The subject on which I have addressed you

is one, on which, in its practical bearing, you, my young brethren, will soon be called to act. And when you are so, remember, I beseech you, that the questions which will arise demand adjudication, not merely by the conventional laws of courtesy and good neighbourhood, but by your position with reference to the entire community, and the relation in which you stand to the great Head of the church.

And now, my brethren, I sincerely commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. May his spirit of counsel and wisdom richly rest upon you. May he make you able and faithful ministers of the gospel of reconciliation. And, at length, having fought a good fight, finished a holy course, and kept the faith undefiled, may you, with many trained for heaven through your ministry, be gathered into the fold of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

*Handwritten text, likely a letter or manuscript, is visible below the printed text. It is written in cursive and appears to be a personal communication, possibly from a friend or family member, discussing the author's journey and faith. The text is too faint to transcribe accurately but seems to contain phrases like 'I have been...', 'I have seen...', and 'I have heard...'. It is written in ink on aged paper.*







16  
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THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

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A

# DISCOURSE

AT THE

INSTALLATION OF THEODORE PARKER

AS MINISTER

OF THE

TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN BOSTON,

JANUARY 4, 1846.

DELIVERED BY HIMSELF.

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## DISCOURSE.

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FOR nearly a year we have assembled within these walls from week to week, — I think not idly ; I know you have not come for any trivial end. You have recently made a formal organization of yourselves for religious action. To-day, at your request, I enter regularly on a ministry in the midst of you. What are we doing ; what do we design to do ? We are here to establish a Christian church, and a Christian church, as I understand it, is a body of men and women united together in a common desire of religious excellence and with a common regard for Jesus of Nazareth, regarding him as the noblest example of morality and religion,—as the model therefore in this respect for us. Such a church may have many rites as our Catholic brothers, or but few rites as our Protestant brothers, or no rites at all, as our brothers, the Friends. It may be, nevertheless, a Christian church, for the *essential of substance* — which makes it a religious body — is the union for the purpose of cultivating love to God and man ; and the *essential of form* — which makes it a

Christian body — is the common regard for Jesus considered as the highest representative of God that we know. It is not the Form — either of ritual or of doctrine — but the Spirit which constitutes a Christian church. A staff may sustain an old man, or a young man may bear it in his hands as a toy, but walking is walking, though the man have no staff for ornament or support. Now a Christian Spirit may exist under rituals and doctrines the most diverse. 'It were hard to say a man is not a Christian, because he believes in the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Pope, while Jesus taught no such doctrine ; foolish to say one is no Christian because he denies the existence of a Devil though Jesus believed it. To make a man's Christian name depend on a belief of all that is related by the numerous writers in the Bible, is as absurd as to make that depend on a belief in all the words of Luther, or Calvin, or St. Augustine. It is not for me to say a man is not theoretically a Christian because he believes that Slavery is a divine and Christian institution ; that War is grateful to God — saying with the Old Testament, that God himself "is a man of war," who teaches men to fight and curses such as refuse ; — or because he believes that all men are born totally depraved, and the greater part of them are to be damned everlastingly by "a jealous God" who is "angry with the wicked every day," and that the few are to be "saved" only because God unjustly punished an innocent man for their sake : — I will not say a man is not a Christian though he believe all the melancholy things related of God in some parts of the Old Testament — yet I know few doctrines so hostile to real religion as these have proved themselves. In our day it has strangely come to pass that a little

sect — themselves hooted at and called “Infidels” by the rest of Christendom — deny the name of Christian to such as publicly reject the miracles of the Bible. Time will doubtless correct the error. Fire is fire, and ashes ashes, say what we may ; each will work after its kind. Now if Christianity be the Absolute Religion, it must allow all beliefs that are true, and may exist and be developed in connection with all forms consistent with the Absolute Religion, and the degree thereof represented by Jesus.

The action of a Christian church seems to be two-fold, first on its own members, and then, through their means, on others out of its pale. Let a word be said of each in its order. If I were to ask you why you came here to-day ; why you have often come to this house hitherto ? — the serious amongst you would say : That we might become better ; more manly ; upright before God and downright before men ; that we might be Christians, — men good and pious after the fashion Jesus spoke of. The first design of such a church then is to help ourselves become Christians. Now the substance of Christianity is Piety — Love to God, and Goodness — Love to men. It is a religion, the germs whereof are born in your heart, appearing in your earliest childhood ; which are developed just in proportion as you become a man — and are indeed the standard measure of your life. As the primeval rock lies at the bottom of the sea and appears at the top of the loftiest mountains, so in a finished character religion underlies all and crowns all. Christianity, to be perfect and entire, demands a complete manliness ; the bravest development of the whole man, Mind, Heart and Soul.

It aims not to destroy the sacred peculiarities of individual character. It cherishes and develops them in their perfection, leaving Paul to be Paul, not Peter, and John to be John, not Jude nor James. We are born different, into a world where unlike things are gathered together, that there may be a special work for each. Christianity respects this diversity in men — aiming not to undo but further God's will ; not fashioning all men after one pattern — to think alike, act alike, be alike, even look alike. It is something far other than Christianity which demands that. A Christian church then should put no fetters on the man ; it should have unity of purpose, but with the most entire freedom for the individual. When you sacrifice the man to the mass in Church or State — Church or State becomes an offence, a stumbling block in the way of progress — and must end or mend. The greater the variety of individualities in Church or State, the better is it — so long as all are really manly, humane and accordant. A church must needs be partial, not catholic, where all men think alike — narrow and little. Your church-organ, to have compass and volume, must have pipes of various sound, and the skillful artist destroys none, but tunes them all to harmony ; if otherwise, he does not understand his work. 'In becoming Christians let us not cease to be men ; nay, we cannot be Christians unless we are men first. It were unchristian to love Christianity better than the Truth, or Christ better than Man.'

But Christianity is not only the Absolute Religion, it has also the Ideal-man. In Jesus of Nazareth it gives us, in a certain sense, the Model of religious excellence. It is a great thing to have the perfect Idea of religion ;



to have also that Idea made real, satisfactory to the wants of any age — is a yet further greatness. A Christian church should aim to have its members Christians as Jesus was the Christ; — sons of man as he was; — sons of God as much as he. To be that it is not needful to observe all the forms he complied with — only such forms as help you; not needful to have all the thoughts that he had — only such thoughts as are true. If Jesus were ever mistaken — as the Evangelists make it appear — then it is a part of Christianity to avoid his mistakes as well as to accept his truths. It is the part of a Christian church to teach men so; to stop at no man's limitations; to prize no word so high as Truth; no man so dear as God. Jesus came not to fetter men, but free them.

Now Jesus is a Model-man in this respect: that He stands in a true relation to men — that of forgiveness for their ill-treatment, service for their needs, trust in their nature, and constant love towards them, — towards even the wicked and hypocritical; in a true relation to God — that of entire obedience to Him, of perfect trust in Him, of love towards Him with the whole mind, heart and soul, — and love of God is also love of Truth, Goodness, Usefulness, love of Love itself. Obedience to God and Trust in God is obedience to these things, and trust in them. If Jesus had loved any opinion better than Truth, then had he lost that relation to God — and so far ceased to be inspired by Him; had he allowed any partial feeling to overcome the spirit of universal love, then also he had sundered himself from God, and been at discord not in harmony with the Infinite.

Now, if Jesus be the Model-man, then should a

Christian church teach its members to hold the same relation to God that Christ held ; to be one with Him ; incarnations of God, as much and as far as Jesus was one with God, and an incarnation thereof — a manifestation of God in the flesh. It is Christian to receive all the Truths of the Bible ; all the truths that are not in the Bible just as much. It is Christian also to reject all the errors that come to us from without the Bible or from within the Bible. The Christian man, or the Christian church, is to stop at no man's limitation ; at the limit of no book. God is not dead, nor even asleep, but awake and alive as ever of old ; He inspires men now no less than beforetime ; is ready to fill *your* mind, heart and soul with Truth, Love, Life, as to fill Moses and Jesus, and that on the same terms, — for inspiration comes by universal laws and not by partial exceptions. Each point of Spirit, as each atom of space, is still bathed in the tides of Deity. But all good men, all Christian men, all inspired men will be no more alike than all wicked men. It is the same light that is blue in the sky and gold in the sun. " All nature's difference makes all nature's peace."

Now, we can attain this relation to man and God only on condition that we are free. If a church cannot allow freedom it were better not to allow itself, but cease to be. Unity of purpose, with entire freedom for the individual, should be the motto. It is only free men that can find the Truth, love the Truth, live the Truth. As much freedom as you shut out so much falsehood do you shut in. It is a poor thing to purchase unity of church-action at the cost of individual freedom. The Catholic church tried it and you see what came thereof : Science forsook it

— calling it a Den of lies. Morality forsook it, as the Mystery of iniquity, and Religion herself protested against it — as the Mother of abominations. The Protestant churches are trying the same thing, and see whither they tend and what foes rise up against them — Philosophy with its Bible of Nature, and Religion with its Bible of Man — both the hand-writing of God. The great problem of Church and State is this : To produce unity of action and yet leave individual freedom not disturbed ; to balance into harmonious proportions the mass and the man, the centripetal and centrifugal powers — as, by God's wondrous living mechanism, they are balanced in the worlds above. In the State we have done this more wisely than any nation heretofore. In the churches it remains yet to do. But man is equal to all God appoints for him. His desires are ever proportionate to his duty and his destinies. The strong cry of the nations for liberty — a craving as of hungry men for bread and water — shows what liberty is worth, and what it is destined to do. Allow freedom to think, and there will be Truth ; freedom to act, and we shall have Heroic works ; freedom to live and be, and we shall have Love to men and Love to God. The world's history proves that, and our own history. Jesus, our model-man, was the freest the world ever saw !

Let it be remembered that every Truth is of God, and will lead to good and good only. Truth is the seed whereof welfare is the fruit ; for every grain thereof we plant some one shall reap a whole harvest of welfare. A lie is of the Devil, and must lead to want and woe and death, ending at last in a storm where it rains tears and perhaps blood. Have freedom and you will sow

new truth to reap its satisfaction ; submit to thralldom and you sow lies to reap the death they bear. A Christian church should be the home of the soul, where it enjoys the largest liberty of the Sons of God. If fettered elsewhere here let us be free. Christ is the Liberator — he came not to drive slaves, but to set men free. The churches of old did their greatest work, when there was most freedom in those churches.

Here too should the spirit of Devotion be encouraged. The soul of man communing with his God in aspirations after Purity and Truth, in resolutions for Goodness, and Piety, and a manly Life. These are a prayer. The fact that men freely hold truths in common, great truths and universal ; that unitedly they lift up their souls to God seeking instruction of Him — this will prove the strongest bond between man and man. It seems to me that the Protestant churches have not fully done justice to the sentiment of worship ; that in taking care of the Head we have forgotten the Heart. To think Truth is the worship of the Head ; to do noble works of usefulness and charity the worship of the Will ; to feel love and trust in man and God — is the glad worship of the Heart. A Christian church should be broad enough for both, should seek Truth and promote Piety — that both together might toil in good works.

There should be had the best instruction which can be commanded ; the freest, truest and most manly voice ; the mind most conversant with Truth ; the eloquence of a heart that runs over with goodness, whose faith is unfaltering in Truth, Justice, Purity, and Love — a faith in God ; whose charity is living love to men — even the sinful and the base. Teaching is the breath-



ing of one man's inspiration into another, a most real thing among real men. In a church there should be instruction for the young. God appoints the Father and Mother the natural teachers of children; above all is it so in their religious culture. But there are some who cannot, many who will not fulfil this trust. Hence it has been found necessary for wise and good men to offer their instruction to such. In this matter it is Religion we need more than Theology, and of this it is not mere traditions and mythologies we are to teach, the anile tales of a rude people in a dark age, things our pupils will do well to forget soon as they are men, and which they will have small reason to thank us for obscuring their minds withal; — but it is the great, everlasting truths of Religion which should be taught, enforced by examples of noble men — which tradition tells of, or the present age affords — all this to be suited to the tender years of the child. Christianity should be represented as human, as man's nature in its true greatness; religion shown to be beautiful, a real duty corresponding to man's deepest desire, that as religion affords the deepest satisfaction to man, so it is man's most universal want. Christ should be shown to men as he was — the manliest of men, the most divine because the most human. Children should be taught to respect their nature; to consider it as the noblest of all God's works; to know that perfect Truth and Goodness are demanded of them, and by that only can they be worthy men; taught to feel that God is present in Boston and to-day, as much as ever in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus. They should be taught to abhor the public sins of our times — but to love and imitate its great examples of nobleness, and practical

religion, which stand out amid the mob of worldly pretenders in this day.

Then, too, if one of our members falls into unworthy ways, is it not the duty of some one to speak with him — not as with authority to command, but with affection to persuade? Did any one of you ever address an erring brother on the folly of his ways with manly tenderness, and try to charm him back, and find a cold repulse? If a man is in error he will be grateful to one that tells him so; will learn most from men who make him ashamed of his littleness of life. In this matter it seems many a good man comes short of his duty.

There is yet another way in which a church should act on its own household, and that is by direct material help in time of need. There is the eternal distinction of the Strong and the Weak, which cannot be changed. But as things now go there is another inequality not of God's appointment, but of man's perversity — the distinction of rich and poor — of men bloated by superfluous wealth, and men starving and freezing from want. You know and I know how often the strong abuse their strength — exerting it solely for themselves and often to the ruin of the weak; we all know that such are reckoned great in the world — though they may have grown rich solely by clutching at what others earned. In Christianity, and before the God of justice, all men are brothers; the strong are so that they may help the weak. As a nation chooses its wisest men to manage its affairs for the nation's good, and not barely their own — so God endows Charles or Samuel with great gifts that they may bless all men thereby. If they use those powers solely for their pleasure then are they false before men; false before God. It is said

of the church of the Friends that no one of their number has ever received the charity of an alms-house, or for a civil offence been shut up in a jail. If the poor forsake a church, be sure that the church forsook God long before.

But the church must have an action on others out of its pale. If a man or a society of men have a truth, they hold it not for themselves alone, but for all men. The solitary thinker, who in a moment of extatic action in his closet at midnight discovers a truth, discovers it for all the world and for eternity. A Christian church ought to love to see its truths extend, so it should put them in contact with the opinions of the world — not with excess of zeal or lack of charity.

A Christian church should be a means of reforming the world, of forming it after the pattern of Christian Ideas. It should therefore bring up the Sentiments of the times, the Ideas of the times, and the Actions of the times, to judge them by the universal standard. In this way it will learn much and be a living church, that grows with the advance of men's Sentiments, Ideas and Actions, and while it keeps the good of the past will lose no brave spirit of the present day: it can teach much; now moderating the fury of men, then quickening their sluggish steps. We expect the sins of Commerce to be winked at in the street; the sins of the State to be applauded on election days and in a Congress — or on the fourth of July; we are used to hear them called the Righteousness of the nation. There they are often measured by the avarice or the ambition of greedy men. You expect them to be tried by passion, which looks only to immediate results and

partial ends. Here they are to be measured by Conscience and Reason — which look to permanent results and universal ends ; to be looked at with reference to the Laws of God, the everlasting Ideas on which alone is based the welfare of the world. Here they are to be examined in the light of Christianity itself. 'If the church be true, many things which seem gainful in the Street and expedient in the Senate House, will here be set down as **WRONG**, and all gain which comes therefrom seen to be but a **LOSS**. If there be a public Sin in the land, if a lie invade the State — it is for the church to give the alarm ; it is here that it may war on lies and sins ; the more widely they are believed in and practised the more are they deadly, the more to be opposed. Here let no false Idea or false Action of the public go without exposure and rebuke. But let no noble heroism of the times, no noble man pass by without due honor. If it is a good thing to honor dead saints and the heroism of our Fathers, it is a better thing to honor the saints of to-day, the live heroism of men who do the battle when that battle is all around us. I know a few such saints, here and there a hero of that stamp, and I will not wait till they are dead and classic before I call them so and honor them as such, for

“ To side with truth is noble when we share her wretched crust ;  
 Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 't is prosperous to be just ;  
 Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,  
 Doubting in his abject spirit, till his Lord is crucified,  
 And the multitude make virtue of the faith they had denied,  
 For Humanity sweeps onward ; where to-day the Martyr stands,  
 On the morrow crouches Judas, with the silver in his hands ;  
 Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fagots burn,  
 While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return  
 To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.”



Do you not see that if a man have a new truth, it must be reformatory and so create an outcry? It will seem destructive as the farmer's plough; like that it is so to tares and thistles, but the herald of the harvest none the less. In this way a Christian church should be a Society for promoting true Sentiments and Ideas. If it would lead, it must go before men; if it would be looked up to, it must stand high. That is not all: It should be a society for the promotion of good works. We are all beneath our Idea, and therefore sinners before God. Yet He gives us the rain, the snow and the sun. It falls on me as well as on the field of my neighbor, who is a far juster man. How can we better repent, cast our own sins behind us, outgrow and forget them, than by helping others to work out their salvation? We are all Brothers before God. Mutually needful we must be; mutually helpful we should be. Here are the ignorant that ask our instruction — not with words only, but with the prayer of their darkness, far more suppliant than speech. I never see an ignorant man younger than myself, without a feeling of self-reproach — for I ask: What have I been doing to suffer him to grow up in nakedness of mind! Every man, born in New England, who does not share the culture of this age is a reproach to more than himself, and will at last actively curse those who began by deserting him. The Christian church should lead the movement for the public education of the people.

Here are the Needy who ask not so much your gold, your bread, or your cloth, as they ask also your sympathy, respect and counsel; that you assist them to help themselves, that they may have gold won by their industry not begged out of your benevolence. It is Jus-

tice more than Charity they ask. Every beggar, every pauper, is a reproach to us, and condemns our civilization. For how has it come to pass that in a land of abundance here are men, for no fault of their own, born into want, living in want, and dying of want? and that while we pretend to a religion which says all men are brothers! There is a horrid wrong somewhere.

Here too are the Drunkard, the Criminal, the Abandoned person — sometimes the foe of society — but far oftener the victims of society. Whence come the tenants of our alms-houses, jails — the victims of vice in all our towns? Why, from the lowest rank of the people; — from the poorest and most ignorant! Say rather from the most neglected — and the public sin is confessed and the remedy hinted at. What have the Strong been doing all this while, that the Weak have come to such a state? Let them answer for themselves.

Now for all these ought a Christian church to toil. It should be a church of Good Works — if it is a church of Good Faith it will be so. Does not Christianity say THE STRONG SHOULD HELP THE WEAK? Does not that mean something? It once did. Has the Christian fire faded out from those words, once so marvelously bright? Look round you — in the streets of your own Boston! See the Ignorant — men and women with scarce more than the *stature* of men and women; — boys and girls growing up in ignorance and the low civilization which comes thereof, the Barbarians of Boston. Their character will one day be a blot and a curse to the nation — and who is to blame? Why, the ablest and best men, who might have had it otherwise if they would. Look at the Poor — men

often of small ability, weak by nature, born into a weak position — therefore doubly weak ; men whom the Strong use for their purpose and then cast them off as we throw away the rind of an orange after we have drunk its generous juice. Behold the Wicked — so we call the weak men that are publicly caught in the cobweb of the Law ; ask why they became wicked ; how we have aimed to reform them ; what we have done to make them respect themselves, to believe in Goodness, in Man and God ? and then say if there is not something for Christian men to do — something for a Christian church to do ! Every Alms-house in Massachusetts shows that the churches have not done their duty, that the Christians lie Lies when they call Jesus Master and men Brothers ! Every Jail is a monument — on which it is writ in letters of iron that we are still Heathens, — and the Gallows, black and hideous, the embodiment of Death, the last argument a “ Christian ” State offers to the poor wretches it trained up to be criminals, it stands there a sign of our infamy, and while it lifts its horrid arm to crush the life out of some miserable man — whose blood cries to God against Cain in the nineteenth century — it lifts that same arm as an index of our shame !

Is that all ? — Oh, no ! Did not Jesus say — Resist not evil — with evil ? Is not War the worst form of that evil ; and is there on earth a nation so greedy of war ; a nation more reckless of provoking it ; one where the war-horse so soon conducts his foolish rider into fame and power ? The “ Heathen ” Chinese might send their missionaries to America, and teach us love to men ! Is that all ? — Far from it. Did not Christ say whatsoever you would that men should do unto

you, do you even so unto them ; — and are there not three million Brothers of yours and mine in bondage here, the hopeless sufferers of a savage doom ; debarred the civilization of our age — the Barbarians of the nineteenth century ; shut out from the pretended religion of Christendom — the Heathens of a Christian land ; chained down from the liberty inalienable in man — the slaves of a Christian Republic ! Does not a cry of indignation ring out from every Legislature in the North ; does not the Press war with its million throats, and a voice of indignation go up from East and West, out from the hearts of freemen ? Oh, no. There is none of that cry against the mightiest sin of this age. The Rock of Plymouth — sanctified by the feet which led a nation's way to freedom's large estate — provokes no more voice than the rottenest stone in the mountains of the West. The few that speak a manly word for Truth and everlasting Right, are called fanatics ; bid be still — lest they spoil the market ! Great God ! and has it come to this — that men are silent over such a sin ? 'T is even so. Then it must be that every church which dares assume the name of Christ — that dearest name to men — thunders and lightens on this hideous wrong ! That is not so. The church is dumb — while the State is only silent ; while the servants of the people are only asleep — “ God's ministers ” are dead !

In the midst of all these wrongs and sins — the crimes of Men, Society and the State — amid popular ignorance, pauperism, crime, and war, and slavery too — is the church to say nothing, do nothing ; nothing for the good of such as feel the wrong, nothing to save them who do the wrong ? Men tell us so — in word



and deed ; that way alone is “ safe ! ” If I thought so, I would never enter the church but once again, and then to bow my shoulders to their manliest work — to heave down its strong pillars, arch and dome, and roof, and wall, steeple and tower, though like Samson I buried myself under the ruins of that temple which profaned the worship of God most high — of God most loved. I would do this in the name of Man ; — in the name of Christ I would do it — yes, in the dear and blessed name of God.

It seems to me that a church which dares name itself Christian — the CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER ; — which aspires to be a true church — must set itself about all this business — and be not merely a church of Theology, but of Religion ; not of Faith only, but of Works ; a just church by its faith bringing works into life. It should not be a church termagant — which but peevishly scolds at sin, in its anile way ; but a church militant against every form of evil, which not only censures, but writes out on the walls of the world the brave example of a Christian life, that all may take pattern therefrom. Thus only can it become the church triumphant. If a church were to waste less time in building its palaces of theological speculation — palaces mainly of straw, and based upon the chaff — erecting air-castles and fighting battles to defend those palaces of straw, it would surely have more time to use in the practical good works of the day. If it thus made a city free from Want and Ignorance and Crime — I know I vent a Heresy — but I think it would be quite as Christian an enterprise, as though it restored all the theology of the dark ages ; — quite as pleasing to God. A good sermon is a good thing, no doubt, but its end

is not answered by its being preached ; — even by its being listened to and applauded ; only by its awakening a deeper life in the hearers. But in the multitude of sermons there is danger lest the bare hearing thereof be thought a religious duty — not a means, but an end — and so our Christianity vanish in words. What if every Sunday afternoon the most pious and manly of our number, who saw fit, resolved themselves into a committee of the whole for practical religion, and held not a formal meeting, but one more free, sometimes for the purpose of devotion, — the practical work of making ourselves better Christians, nearer to one another, and sometimes that we might find means to help such as needed help — the Poor, the Ignorant, the Intemperate and the Wicked ! Would it not be a work profitable to ourselves — and useful to others weaker than we ? For my own part I think there are no ordinances of religion like good works ; no day too sacred to help my brother in ; no Christianity like a practical love of God shown by a practical love of Men. Christ told us that if we had brought our gift to the very altar, and there remembered our brother had cause of complaint against us, we must leave the divine service, and pay the human service first ! If my Brother be in Slavery, in Want, in Ignorance, in Sin, and I can aid him and do not, he has much against me — and God can better wait for my prayer than my brother for my help !

The Saints of olden time perished at the stake ; they hung on gibbets ; they agonized upon the rack ; they died under the steel of the tormentor. It was the Heroism of our Fathers' day that swam the unknown seas ; froze in the woods ; starved with want and cold ; fought battles with the red right hand. It is the Saint-

hood and Heroism of our day that toils for the Ignorant, the Poor, the Weak, the Oppressed, the Wicked. Yes, it is our saints and heroes who fight fighting; who contend for the slave, and his master too, for the Drunkard, the Criminal; yes, for the Wicked or the Weak in all their forms. It is they that with weapons of heavenly proof fight the great battle for the souls of men. Though I detest war in each particular fibre of my heart yet I honor the Heroes among our fathers who fought with bloody hand; Peace-makers in a savage way they were faithful to their light; the most inspired can be no more, and we, with greater light, do, it may be, far less. I love and venerate the Saints of old; men who dared step in front of their age; accepted Christianity when it cost something to be a Christian, because it meant something; they applied Christianity — so far as they knew it — to the Lies and Sins of their times, and won a sudden and a fiery death. But the Saints and the Heroes of this day, who draw no sword, whose right hand is never bloody, who burn in no fires of wood or sulphur, nor languish briefly on the hasty cross — the Saints and Heroes who, in a worldly world, dare to be men; in an age of conformity and selfishness, speak for Truth and Man, living for noble aims; — men who will swear to no lies however so popular; who will honor no sins though never so profitable, respected and ancient; — men who count Christ not their Master, but Teacher, Friend, Brother — and strive like him to practice all they pray; to incarnate and make real the Word of God — these men I honor far more than the Saints of old. I know their trials, I see their dangers, I appreciate their sufferings, and since the day when the man

on Calvary bowed his head — bidding persecution farewell with his “*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,*” I find no such Saints and Heroes as live now! They win hard fare, and hard toil. They lay up shame and obloquy. Theirs is the most painful of martyrdoms. Racks and fagots soon waft the soul to God — stern messengers but swift. A boy could bear that passage, the Martyrdom of death. But the temptation of a long life of neglect, and scorn, and obloquy, and shame, and want, and desertion of false friends — to live blameless though blamed, cut off from human sympathy — that is the martyrdom of to-day. I shed no tears for such martyrs. I shout when I see one — take courage and thank God for the real Saints, Prophets and Heroes of to-day. In another age, men shall be proud of these Puritans and Pilgrims of this day. Churches shall glory in their names and celebrate their praise in sermon and in song. Yea, though now men would steal the rusty sword from underneath the bones of a Saint or Hero long deceased, to smite off therewith the head of a new Prophet — that ancient Hero’s Son; — though they would gladly crush the heart out of him with the tomb-stones they piled up for great men, dead and honored now, yet in some future day, that mob, penitent, baptized with a new spirit — like drunken men returned to sanity once more — shall search through all this land for marble white enough to build a monument to that Prophet whom their fathers slew; they shall seek through all the world for gold of fineness fit to chronicle such names! I cannot wait; but I will honor such men now — not adjourn the warning of their voice, and the glory of their example, till another age! The church may cast



out such men ; burn them with the torments of an age too refined in its cruelty to use coarse fagots and the vulgar axe ! It is no loss to these men — but the ruin of the church. I say the Christian church of the nineteenth century must honor such men — if it would do a church's work ; must take pains to make such men as these, or it is a dead church, with no claim on us, except that we bury it. A true church will always be the church of Martyrs. The ancients commenced every great work with a victim ! We do not call it so ; but the Sacrifice is demanded, got ready, and offered by unconscious priests long ere the enterprise succeeds. Did not Christianity begin with a Martyrdom ?

In this way, by gaining all the truth of the age in thought or action, by trying public opinion with its own brave ideas, by promoting good works, applying a new truth to an old error, and with unpopular righteousness overcoming each popular sin — the Christian church should lead the civilization of the age. Now the Leader looks before, goes before, and knows where he is going ; knows the way thither. It is only on this condition that he leads at all. Now if the church by looking after Truth, and receiving it when it comes, be in unison with God — it will be in unison with all Science, which is only the thought of God translated from the facts of nature into the words of men. In such a case, the church will not fear Philosophy, nor in the face of modern science aim to re-establish the dreams and fables of a ruder day. It will not lack new truth, daring only to quote — nor be obliged to sneak behind the inspired words of old Saints as its only fortress, for it will have words just as truly inspired,

dropping from the golden mouths of Saints and Prophets now. For leaders it will look not back — but forth ; will fan the first faint sparkles of that noble fire just newly kindled from the skies ; not smother them in the ashes of fires long spent ; not quench them with holy water from Jordan or the Nile. A church truly Christian, professing Christ as its model-man, and aiming to stand in the relation he stood, must lead the way in moral enterprises, in every work which aims directly at the welfare of man. There was a time when the Christian churches, as a whole, held that rank. Do they now ? Oh, no. Not even the Quakers — perhaps the last sect that abandoned it. A Prophet, filled with Love of Man and Love of God, is not therein at home. I speak a sad truth, and I say it in sorrow. But look at the churches of this city ; — do they lead the Christian movements of this city ; — the Temperance movement ; the Peace movement ; the movement for the Freedom of men ; for Education ; the movement to make society more just, more wise and good ; the great religious movement of these times — for, hold down our eye-lids as we will, there is a religious movement at this day on foot, such as even New England never saw before — do they lead in these things ? Oh, no, not at all. That great Christian orator, the noblest man New England has seen in this century, perhaps, whose word has even now gone forth to the nations beyond the sea — while his Spirit has gone home to his Father — when he turned his attention to the practical evils of our time and our land, and our civilization — vigorously applying Christianity to life — why he lost favor in his own little sect ! They feared him, soon as his Spirit looked

over their narrow walls, aspiring to lead men to a better work. I know men can now make sectarian capital out of the great name of Channing, so he is praised; perhaps praised loudest by the very men who then cursed him by their gods. Ay, by *their* gods he was accursed! The churches lead the Christian movements of these times? — why, has there not just been driven out of this city, and out of this state, a man conspicuous in all these movements, after five and twenty years of noble toil; driven out because he was conspicuous in them! You know it is so, and you know how and by whom he is thus driven out!

Christianity is Humanity; Christ is the Son of Man; the manliest of men; humane as a woman; pious and hopeful as a prayer; but brave as man's most daring thought. He has led the world in Morals and Religion for eighteen hundred years, only because he was the manliest man in it; the humanest and bravest man in it, and hence the divinest. He may lead it eighteen hundred years more, for we are bid believe that God can never make again a greater man; no, none so great. But the churches do not lead men therein, for they have not his spirit; neither that womanliness which wept over Jerusalem, nor that manliness which drew down fire enough from Heaven to light the world's altars for well-nigh two thousand years.

There are many ways in which Christ may be denied: — one is that of the bold Blasphemer — who, out of a base and haughty heart mocks, scoffing at that manly man, and spits upon the nobleness of Christ! There are few such deniers; my heart mourns for them. But they do little harm. Religion is so dear to men, no

scoffing word can silence that, and the brave soul of this young Nazarene has made itself so deeply felt that scorn and mockery of him are but an icicle held up against the summer's sun. 'There is another way to deny him, and that is : — to call him Lord, and never do his bidding ; to stifle free minds with his words ; and with the authority of his name to cloak, to mantle, screen and consecrate the follies, errors, sins of men ! From this we have much to fear.

The church that is to lead this century will not be a church creeping on all fours ; mewling and whining, its face turned down, its eyes turned back. It must be full of the brave, manly spirit of the day, keeping also the good of times past. There is a terrific energy in this age, for man was never so much developed, so much the master of himself before. Great truths — moral, political, have come to light. They fly quickly. The iron Prophet of Types publishes his visions, of weal or woe, to the near and the far. This marvellous age has invented Steam, and the Magnetic Telegraph — apt symbols of itself — before which the miracles of fable are but an idle tale. 'It demands, as never before, freedom for itself, usefulness in its institutions ; truth in its teachings, and beauty in its deeds. Let a church have that freedom, that usefulness, truth, and beauty, and the Energy of this age will be on its side. But the church which did for the fifth century, or the fifteenth, will not do for this. What is well enough at Rome, Oxford or Berlin, is not well enough for Boston. It must have our Ideas, the smell of our ground, and have grown out of the religion in our soul. The freedom of America must be there before this en-



ergy will come ; the wisdom of the nineteenth century before its Science will be on the churches' side — else that Science will go over to the “ Infidels.”

Our churches are not in harmony with what is best in the present age. Men call their temples after their old Heroes and Saints — John, Paul, Peter, and the like. But we call nothing else after the old names ; a school of Philosophy would be condemned if called Aristotelian, Platonic, or even Baconian. We out-travel the past in all but this. In the church it seems taught there is no progress, unless we have all the past on our back. So we despair of having men fit to call churches by. We look back and not forward. We think the next Saint must talk Hebrew like the old ones, and repeat the same mythology. So when a new Prophet comes we only stone him.

A church that believes only in past inspiration will appeal to old Books as the Standard of Truth and Source of light ; will be antiquarian in its habits ; will call its children by the old names ; war on the new age, not understanding the man-child born to rule the world. A church that believes in inspiration now will appeal to God ; try things by Reason and Conscience ; aim to surpass the old heroes ; baptise its children with a new spirit, and using the present age will lead public opinion, and not follow it. Had Christ looked back for counsel, he might have founded a church fit for Abraham or Isaac to worship in, not for the ages to come, or the age then. You may put the hands of your clock forward, but not back. He that feels he is near to God, does not fear to be far from men ; if before, he helps lead them on ; if above, to lift them up. Let us get all we can from the Hebrews and others of old time — and that is

much ; but still let us be God's free men, not the Gibbonites of the Past.

Let us have a church that dares imitate the heroism of Jesus ; seek inspiration as he sought it ; judge the past as he ; act on the present like him ; pray as he prayed ; work as he wrought ; live as he lived. Let our doctrines, our forms fit the soul, as the limbs fit the body — growing out of it, growing with it. Let us have a church for the whole man ; — Truth for the Mind ; Good Works for the Hands ; Love for the Heart ; and for the Soul, that Aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering Faith in God which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest, when elsewhere it is most dark. Let our church fit man, as the Heavens fit the earth !

In our day men have made great advances in science, commerce, manufactures, in all the arts of life. We need, therefore, a development of religion corresponding thereto. The leading minds of the age ask freedom to inquire — not merely to *believe*, but to *know* ; to rest on facts. A great spiritual movement goes swiftly forward. The best men see that Religion is religion ; Theology is theology, and not religion ; that true religion is a very simple affair, and the popular theology a very foolish one ; that the Christianity of Christ is not the Christianity of the Street, or the State, or the Churches ; that Christ is not *their* model-man, only “imputed” as such. These men wish to apply good sense to matters connected with religion ; to apply Christianity to life, and make the world a better place, men and women fitter to live in it. In this way they wish to get a theology that is true ; a mode of religion that works, and works well. If a church can answer these

demands, it will be a live church ; leading the civilization of the times, living with all the mighty life of this age, and nation. Its Prayers will be a lifting up of the hearts in noble men towards God, in search of Truth, Goodness, Piety. Its Sacraments will be great works of reform, institutions for the comfort and the culture of men. Let us have a church in which Religion — Goodness towards men, and Piety towards God — shall be the main thing ; let us have a degree of that suited to the growth and demands of this age. In the middle ages, men had erroneous conceptions of religion, no doubt ; yet the church led the world. When she wrestled with the State — the State came undermost to the ground. See the results of that Supremacy — all over Europe there arose the Cloister, Halls of Learning for the chosen few, Minster, Dome, Cathedral — miracles of art ; each costing the wealth of a province. Such was the embodiment of their Ideas of religion — the Prayers of a pious age done in stone, a Psalm petrified as it rose from the world's mouth ; a poor sacrifice, no doubt, but the best they knew how to offer. Now if men were to engage in religion as in Politics, Commerce, Arts ; if the Absolute Religion, the Christianity of Christ, were applied to life with all the might of this age — as the Christianity of the church was then applied — what a result should we not behold ! We should build up a great State with unity in the nation, and freedom in the people ; a State where there was honorable work for every hand, bread for all mouths, clothing for all backs, culture for every mind, and love and faith in every heart. Truth would be our sermon, drawn from the oldest of Scriptures — God's writing there in Nature, here in Man ; Works of daily duty would be

our Sacrament ; Prophets inspired of God would minister the Word, and Piety send up her Psalm of prayer, sweet in its notes, and joyfully prolonged. ‘The noblest monument to Christ, the fairest trophy of religion, is a noble people, where all are well fed and clad, industrious, free, educated, manly, pious, wise and good.’

Some of you may now remember, how ten months and more ago, I first came to this house to speak. I shall remember it forever. In those rainy Sundays the very skies looked dark. Some came doubtingly, uncertain, looking around, and hoping to find courage in another’s hope. Others came with clear glad face ; openly, joyfully, certain they were right ; not fearing to meet the issue ; not afraid to be seen meeting it. Some came, perhaps, not used to worship in a church, but not the less welcomed here ; some mistaking me for a destroyer, a doubter, a denier of all truth, a scoffer, an enemy to man and God ! I wonder not at that. Misguided men had told you so, in Sermon and in Song ; in words publicly printed and published without shame ; in the covert calumny, slyly whispered in the dark ! Need I tell you my feelings ; how I felt at coming to the town made famous by great men, Mayhew, Chauncy, Buckminster, Kirkland, Holley, Pierpont, Channing, Ware — names dear and honored in my boyish heart ! Need I tell you how I felt at sight of the work which stretched out before me ? Do you wonder that I asked : Who is sufficient for these things ? and said : Alas, not I, thou knowest, Lord ! But some of you told me you asked not the wisdom of a wiser man, the ability of one stronger — but only that I should do what I could. I came, not doubting that I had



some truths to say ; not distrusting God, nor Man, nor you — distrustful only of myself. I feared I had not the power, amid the dust and noises of the day, to help you see and hear the great realities of Religion as they appeared to me ; to help you feel the life of real Religion, as in my better moments I have felt its truth ! But let that pass. As I came here from Sabbath to Sabbath, when I began to feel your spirits prayed with mine — a prayer for Truth and Life ; as I looked down into your faces — thoughtful and almost breathless — I forgot my self-distrust ; I saw the time was come ; that, feebly as I know I speak — my best thoughts were ever the most welcome ! I saw that the harvest was plenteous indeed ; but the preacher — I feel it still — was all unworthy of his work !

Brothers and Sisters : Let us be true to our Sentiment and Ideas. Let us not imitate another's form unless it symbolise a truth to us. We must not affect to be singular, but not fear to be alone. Let us not foolishly separate from our Brothers elsewhere. Truth is yet before us, not only springing up out of the manly words of this Bible, but out of the ground ; out of the Heavens ; out of man and God. Whole firmaments of Truth hang ever o'er our heads, waiting the telescopic eye of the true-hearted see-er. Let us follow Truth — of thought or sentiment — wherever she may call. God's Daughter cannot lead us from the path. The further on we go, the more we find. Had Columbus turned back only the day before he saw the land, the adventure had been worse than lost.

We must practice a manly self-denial. Religion always demands that, but never more than when our

Brothers separate from us, and we stand alone. By our mutual love and mutual forbearance, we shall stand strong. With zeal for our common work, let us have charity for such as dislike us, such as oppose and would oppress us. Let us love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for such as despitefully use us. Let us overcome their evil speech with our own goodness. If others have treated us ill, called us unholy names, and mocked at us—let us forgive it all, here and now, and help them also to forget and outgrow that spirit which bade them treat us so. A kind answer is fittest rebuke to an unkind word!

If we have any truth it will not be kept hid. It will run over the lid of our urn and water our Brothers' field. Were any truth to come down to us in advance from God—it were not that we might forestall the light, but shed it forth for all His children to walk by and rejoice in. "One candle will light a thousand" if it be itself lighted. Let our light shine before men so that they may see our good deeds, and themselves praise God by a manly life. This we owe to them as to ourselves. A noble thought and a mean man make a sorry union. Let our Idea show itself in our life—that is preaching, right eloquent. Do this, and we begin to do good to men—and though they should oppose us, and our work should fail, we shall have yet the approval of our own heart, the approval of God; be whole within ourselves, and one with Him.

Some of you are venerable men. I have wondered that a youthful ardor should have brought you here. Your silvery heads have seemed a benediction to my

work. But most of you are young. I know it is no aping of a fashion that has brought you here. I have no eloquence to charm or please you with; I only speak right on. I have no reputation but a bad name in the churches. I know you came not idly — but seeking after Truth. Give a great Idea to an old man, and he carries it to his grave; give it to a young man, and he carries it to his life. It will bear both young and old through the grave and into eternal Heaven beyond.

Young men and women — the duties of the world fall eminently on you. God confides to your hands the Ark which holds the treasures of the age. On young shoulders he lays the burthen of life. Yours is the period of passion; the period of enterprise and of work. It is by successive generations that mankind goes forward. The old, stepping into honorable graves, leave their places and the results they won to you. But departing they seem to say — as they linger and look back : — Do ye greater than we have done ! The young just coming into your homes seem to say : — Instruct us to be nobler than yourselves ! Your life is the answer to your children and your sires. The next generation will be as you make it. It is not the Schools but the people's character that educates the child. Amid the trials, duties, dangers of your life — Religion alone can guide you. It is not the world's eye that is on you, but God's ; it is not the world's religion that will suffice you, but the Religion of a Man, which unites you with Truth, Justice, Piety, Goodness — yes, which makes you one with God !

Young men and women — you can make this church a fountain of life to thousands of fainting souls. Yes,

you can make this city nobler than city ever was before. A manly life is the best gift you can leave mankind ; that can be copied forever. Architects of your own weal or woe — your destiny is mainly in your own hands. It is no great thing to reject the popular falsehoods ; little and perhaps not hard. But to receive the great sentiments and lofty truths of real Religion, the Christianity of Christ, to love them, to live them in your business and your home, — that is the greatest work of man. Thereby you partake of the Spirit and Nature of God ; you achieve the true destiny for yourself ; you help your brothers do the same.

When my own life is measured by the ideal of that young Nazarene, I know how little I deserve the name of Christian, — none knows that fact so well as I. But *you* have been denied the name of Christian because you came here — asking me to come. Let men see that you have the reality, though they withhold the name. Your words are the least part of what you say to men. The foolish only will judge you by your talk ; wise men by the general tenor of your life. Let your Religion appear in your work and your play. Pray in your strongest hours. Practice your prayers. By fair-dealing, justice, kindness, self-control, and the great work of helping others while you help yourself, let your Life prove a worship. These are the real sacraments and Christian communion with God, to which water and wine are only helps. Criticise the world not by censure only, but by the example of a great life. Shame men out of their littleness not by making mouths, but by walking great and beautiful amongst them. You love God best when you love



men most. Let your prayers be an uplifting of the Soul in thought, resolution, love, and the light thereof shall shine through the darkest hour of trouble. Have not the Christianity of the street ; but carry Christ's Christianity there. Be noble men — your works must needs be great and manly.

This is the first Sunday of a new year. What an hour for resolutions ; what a moment for prayer ! If you have sins in your bosom, cast them behind you now. In the last year, God has blessed us ; blessed us all. On some his angels waited, robed in white, and brought new joys ; here a Wife to bind men closer yet to Providence, and there a Child, a new Messiah sent to tell of innocence and Heaven. To some his angels came clad in dark livery, — veiling a joyful countenance with unpropitious wings, — and bore away child, father, sister, wife, or friend. Still were they angels of good Providence — all God's own, and he who looks aright finds that they also brought a blessing but concealed, and left it, though they spoke no word of joy. One day our weeping brother shall find that gift and wear it as a diamond on his breast.

The hours are passing over us — and with them the day. What shall the future Sundays be, and what the year ? What we make them both. God gives us time. We weave it into life, such figures as we may, and wear it as we will. Age slowly rots away the gold we are set in, but the adamant soul lives on, radiant every way in the light streaming down from God. The genius of Eternity, star-crowned, beautiful, and with prophetic eyes, leads us again to the gates of Time, and gives us one more year ; bidding

us fill that golden cup with water as we can or will. There stand the dirty, fetid pools of worldliness and sin; curdled, and mantled, film-covered, streaked and striped with many a hue, they shine there, in the slanting light of new-born day. Around them stand the sons of Earth and cry:—Come hither; drink thou and be saved! Here fill thy golden cups! There you may seek to fill your urn; to stay your thirst. The deceitful element—roping in your hands—shall mock your lip. 'Tis water only to the eye. Nay, show-water only unto men half-blind. But there, hard by, runs down the Stream of Life, its waters never frozen, never dry; fed by perennial dews falling unseen from God. Fill there thine urn, Oh, Brother-man, and thou shalt thirst no more for selfishness and crime, and faint no more amid the toil and heat of day; wash there, and the leprosy of sin, its scales of blindness, shall fall off, and thou be clean forever; kneel there and pray, God shall inspire thy heart with Truth and Love, and fill thy cup with never-ending joy!

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## APPENDIX.

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### LETTER OF THE COMMITTEE TO MR. PARKER.

*Boston, November 28, 1845.*

DEAR SIR : —

Among your friends and congregation at the Melodeon, a Society has been organized according to law ; and we have been instructed, as the Standing Committee, to invite you to become its Minister.

It gives us great pleasure to be the means to forward, in this small degree, the end proposed, and we cordially extend you the invitation, with the sincere hope that it will meet a favorable answer.

We are, truly and respectfully,

Your friends,

MARK HEALEY,  
JOHN FLINT,  
LEVI B. MERIAM,  
AMOS COOLIDGE,  
JOHN G. KING,  
SIDNEY HOMER,  
HENRY SMITH,  
GEO. W. ROBINSON,  
C. M. ELLIS.

TO THE REV. THEODORE PARKER,  
*West Roxbury, Mass.*

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### MR. PARKER'S REPLY.

TO MARK HEALEY, JOHN FLINT, LEVI B. MERIAM, AMOS COOLIDGE,  
JOHN G. KING, SIDNEY HOMER, HENRY SMITH, GEORGE W. ROBIN-  
SON, AND C. M. ELLIS, ESQUIRES.

DEAR FRIENDS : —

When I received your communication of the 28th inst., I did not hesitate in my decision, but I have delayed giving you a formal reply, in order that I might confer with my friends in this place, whom it becomes my painful duty to leave. I accept your invitation ; but wish it to be provided that our connection may at any time be dissolved, by either party giving notice to the other of a desire to that effect, six months before such a separation is to take place.

It is now nearly a year since I began to preach at the Melodeon. I came at the request of some of you ; but I did not anticipate the present result. Far from it. I thought but few would come and listen to what was so widely denounced. But I took counsel of my hopes and not of my fears. It seems to me now that, if we are faithful to our duty, we shall in a few years build up a society which shall be not only a joy to our own hearts, but a blessing also to others, now strangers, and perhaps hostile to us. I feel that we have begun a good work. With earnest desires for the success of our common enterprise, and a willingness to labor for the advancement of real Christianity, I am,

Faithfully, your friend,

THEODORE PARKER.

*West Roxbury, 12th Dec., 1845.*

ON Sunday, January 4, 1846, REV. THEODORE PARKER was installed as Pastor of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society in Boston. The exercises on the occasion were as follows : —

#### INTRODUCTORY HYMN.

#### PRAYER.

#### VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

The Chairman of the Standing Committee then addressed the Congregation as follows : —

By the instructions of the Society, the Committee have made an arrangement with Mr. Parker, by which the services of this Society, under its new organization, should commence with the new year ; and this being our first meeting, it has been set apart for such introductory services as may seem fitting for our position and prospects.

The circumstances under which this Society has been formed, and its progress hitherto, are familiar to most of those present. It first began from certain influences which seemed hostile to the cause of religious freedom. It was the opinion of many of those now present, that a minister of the Gospel, truly worthy of that name, was proscribed on account of his opinions, branded as a heretic, and shut out from the pulpits of this city.

At a meeting of gentlemen held January 22, 1845, the following Resolution was passed : —

“ *Resolved*, That the Rev. Theodore Parker shall have a chance to be heard in Boston.”

To carry this into effect, this Hall was secured for a place of meeting, and the numbers who have met here from Sunday to Sunday, have fully answered our most sanguine expectations. Our meetings have proved that though our friend was shut out from the temples, yet that “the



people heard him gladly." Of the effects of his preaching among us I need not speak. The warm feelings of gratitude and respect expressed on every side, are the best evidences of the efficacy of his words, and of his life.

Out of these meetings our Society has naturally sprung. It became necessary to assume some permanent form — the labor of preaching to two Societies, would of course be too much for Mr. Parker's health and strength — the conviction that his settlement in Boston would be not only important for ourselves, but also for the cause of liberal Christianity and religious freedom — these were some of the reasons which induced us to form a Society, and invite him to become its minister. To this he has consented; with the understanding that the connection may be dissolved by either party, on giving six months' notice to that effect.

At his suggestion, and with the warm approval of the Committee, we have determined to adopt the old Congregational form of settling our minister; without the aid of bishop, churches, or ministers.

As to our Choice, we are, upon mature reflection, and after a year's trial, fully persuaded that we have found our minister, and we ask no ecclesiastical council to ratify our decision.

As to the Charge usually given on such occasions, we prefer to do without it, and trust to the conscience of our minister for his faithfulness.

As to the Right Hand of Fellowship, there are plenty of us ready and willing to give that, and warm hearts with it.

And for such of the other ceremonies usual on such occasions, as Mr. Parker chooses to perform, we gladly accept the substitution of his services for those of any stranger.

The old Puritan form of settling a minister is, for the people to do it themselves; and this let us now proceed to do.

In adopting this course, we are strongly supported both by principle and precedent. Congregationalism is the Republicanism of the Church; and it is fitting that the people themselves should exercise their right of self-government in that most important particular, the choice and settlement of a minister. For examples, I need only remind you of the settlement of the first minister in New England, on which occasion this form was used, and that it is also used at this day by one of the most respectable churches in this city.

The Society then ratified the proceedings by a unanimous vote; and Mr. Parker publicly signified that he adhered to his consent to become the minister of this Society, and the organization of the Society was thus completed.

OCCASIONAL HYMN.

DISCOURSE, BY MR. PARKER.

ANTHEM.

BENEDICTION.



17  
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

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A

# SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION

OF

REV. JOHN T. SARGENT,

AS PASTOR OF

THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

IN

SOMERVILLE, MASS.,

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1846.

---

By WILLIAM H. FURNESS,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA.

---

WITH THE CHARGE, RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

AND

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

---

SOMERVILLE,

PUBLISHED BY EDMUND TUFTS,

1846.

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WILLIAM J. B. WILSON  
1917



## SERMON.

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“NOW IS THE SON OF MAN GLORIFIED.”—John xiii. 31.

I CONSIDER this exclamation, taken in connection with the circumstances, as one of the sublimest of the recorded sayings of Jesus. It was uttered on the night of his arrest, just as Judas quitted the room where the little company of the personal friends of Jesus were assembled. Jesus knew the character of that false disciple, knew the treacherous purpose which he had at heart, knew that he had now gone to put that purpose into execution, and he knew now, as he had never known before, that the end of his own career was close at hand, that in a few hours his life would be terminated by a miserable death. In the progress of events, he had now reached a point where the figure of the black and frightful cross, which had long hovered more or less distinctly before him, suddenly emerges out of the dim future, and stands close before his eyes. And how does the grim phantom look to him? That lonely and terrible fate—why does he not shrink from it with irrepressible horror? To all human appearance he had made no provision to define his purpose to the world, to complete his work and his life. He had not committed a syllable to writing. He had not initiated a single human

being into his doctrine. The persons about him were cherishing views very different from his. And no wisdom that the world had ever possessed, could surmise that his death, taking place at that juncture, and attended by such circumstances of deep disgrace and utter desolation, would prove anything but an absolute defeat, consigning his history and his name to eternal oblivion. And yet, notwithstanding all this, when the prospect of his near death breaks upon him, with a superhuman power of insight he penetrates all the disgraceful associations connected with that death, all the agonies and the blood, and the cross is instantly all a-blaze with an uncreated glory. At the very first glance he beholds the awful catastrophe, not as it was fitted to strike and appal his shrinking mortal nature, but as it was in its essential reality, in the sight of the Unerring.

And, now, when the course of centuries has revealed the power of that event, the Crucifixion of Christ, showing how it inspired his immediate successors, how it helped to establish the Christian name in the world, redounding to the diffusion of truth and the glory of God, we too see that Jesus gave utterance to no raving of an imagination bewildered by fear, but to the profoundest wisdom, to the inspiration of Eternal Truth, when at that hour of darkness, in near view of the horrible cross, he exclaimed: "Now is the Son of Man glorified." He knew beforehand and by a divine intuition, what we are slowly learning from his death and from many a death since his, that to die for the truth is the completest service that can be rendered to it, that the bloody grave of the servant of truth is an open gate, through which streams the light of eternal glory, and that, as the body drops back into its kindred dust, the spirit mounts into the invisible and everlasting heavens that encircle the world, and reigns forever in the world with God. All this Jesus knew. All this is implied in that brief declaration of his which is our present text.

Thus this passage gives us a glimpse of the kingdom of Heaven, for it shows us what indeed is evident from the whole life of Christ, that he lived in a world very different from that in which other men live. When I say this, I do not mean that he was absent, forgetful of this visible scene of things; for nothing escaped him. His whole manner of teaching, the readiness with which he fitted his words to circumstances, shows that he looked around him, not with a dreamy, abstracted eye, but with all his powers of attention wide awake, with the sharpest observation. He made everything that occurred answer his purpose as exactly as if it were there only for his use. He spoke, and the ravens and the lilies waited on him to authenticate his instructions. The grain of mustard seed, the falling sparrow, the homely leaven, bread and wine, all things became implements in his hands to fulfil his ends, to signify his truths. No moment found him lost in idle reverie, unprepared for its exigencies. There was no absence, but a presence of mind, entire, complete.

When I say, therefore, that he lived in a world altogether different from that in which other men lived, my meaning becomes clear by reference to the fact, that, although the same unchanging heavens are stretched out over all our heads, although we walk upon the same earth, and breathe the same air, and see by the light of one and the same sun, yet there are no two of us that live in precisely the same world. The world is to every man as it appears to him, and its appearance to him depends upon his habits of thought, his favorite aims. Influenced, blinded or enlightened by these, seeing things through the medium which is thus formed for him, or which he forms for himself, he sees everything under a peculiar aspect. Now the differences among men in respect of habits of mind are so great, that they may be said to live each in a world of his own, a world, which, while in some respects it is identical with the world in which we all dwell, yet

differs in others from the common world, as if spaces as vast as those that separate the planets intervened between them.

One man's heart is in his trade. Whatever relates to that, he sees. Whatever does not relate, or appear to relate to it, he does not see, however distinctly it may be painted on his retina. He looks up to the sky, and the mysterious stars are only so many points of light, stirring no emotion, stimulating no thought. While another, captivated with the sublime science of Nature, beholds a magnificent mechanism stretching out through an immeasurable expanse, a universe of life and beauty, and heaven itself boasts not so gorgeous a ceiling.

Others, again, are the willing slaves of their appetites, filled with dreams of sensual pleasure, seeking their own gratification at all hazards, heedless of the evil they are doing, the ruin which they spread. To all such the world in which they live is a den. Fine clothes may adorn their persons, fine sentiments may come flowingly from their lips, they may sparkle never so brightly in the sun; but still, I say, their world is a perfect den, a den of wild beasts, strewn with the whitening bones and bleeding hearts which they trample down into the filth and mire; a world, which differs from the world of the pure-hearted, as darkness differs from light, or hell from heaven.

And again, that great company, living only for ease and amusement, thinking only, day after day, about what they shall eat and drink and wear, studying to avoid whatever is likely to annoy them, whatever puts them out of their way, or requires exertion or self-restraint of any sort—in what a world of their own do people of this description live; a world of appearance and show, whose atmosphere is the breath of dying men, and into which truth never comes, and where the distant voice of truth, though sweeter than an angel's, sounds harsh and unmeaning, and all things are in a ceaseless whirl of change, and all its dwellers are



slowly wasting away, subdued to the shadowy quality of all things around them, parting with all manliness and reality, and sinking into a state of deplorable imbecility ; a land more visionary than the regions of the dead, a realm of perpetual death, a mansion glittering to the eye, and hung all over, outside and in, with flowers, but built over graves, nay, itself a grave, a mausoleum, in which lights shine and shadows dance and the sound of music is heard, and the worm of vanity and sin and remorse is eating out all heart, and leaving nothing in the yet beating bosom of man but dust !

How wide, once more, the difference between the world in which the child lives and that in which the aged dwell ! "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." Time then to us is grand and interminable. Years are eternities. All things rejoice in hope, and the path of life is lined with fountains, and the eyes of the young beam with delighted expectation. But as we grow old, how often do the smiles and the gladness vanish ! The world of our youth rolls away from under our feet into the dim abysses of the past, and is visible to the sad eye of memory as a receding star ; and we sink down, and our feet stumble on the dark mountains, and we behold only the memorials of friends long departed and hopes long ago withered, and it is night around us.

Enough, I suppose, has been said to make very plain what I mean, when I say that Jesus dwelt in a world very different from that in which we live. You misunderstand me entirely, if you take the impression that his thoughts were away from this world — that he was not here, body and soul here. He saw all that we see, and infinitely more ; not only the external shape, but the inner life of things. Our eyes rest only on surfaces, and distinguish superficial relations. He looked with clear, unimpeded vision at things and into things. He did not overlook the world as it is, but he looked through it, through and through, and behind changing forms he discerned the unchanging

substance. He looked around and before him not through the eye of man, dimmed as that is by prejudice and evil passions, and hasty judgments and mere appearances, but he saw through the eye of God, which nothing deceives and nothing escapes. And our text, I say, shows this. In his coming crucifixion he saw what no one else saw. To all other eyes, that fact, his miserable death on the cross, what was it but a bloody mass of torture and shame, a horrible ending, the final overthrow of his cause, the utter extinction of him and of whatever purposes he had labored to realize. But to him it looked not so. He saw all the agony and blackness of that event, but he saw more. His steady eye pierced to the very centre and soul of the fact, and the shame and the torture which covered the cross like a heavy cloud, rolled away, and there flashed upon him an unearthly glory—the glory of a mighty martyrdom, a God-given testimony to the truth; and the eternal things of power and wisdom were unveiled, the power and wisdom which Paul afterwards caught a vision of, and before which the world-renowned wisdom of Greece became folly. And did Christ see anything that was not real? Has not the subsequent history of the world attested that he saw his death as it actually was? Did it not lay in the very nature of things, that his friends should be moved, as those devoted men were moved, by his death, to assert his claims and publish his truth? In a few years, the name of him who perished miserably on the cross, is sounding from Jerusalem, through all the cities of Greece, to the palaces of imperial Rome, and the eternal glory of God shines with an unclouded beam from the cross of Christ. Every association of shame has dropped off from that instrument of death, and now it surmounts the temples of Christendom. And thus it is shown, that he saw only what was and is. He gave utterance to no delusion of enthusiasm. He spoke only the simple truth, when he pronounced that bitter death divinely glorious. Thus it was with him

always. He spoke, he lived in a very different world from ours, but still a present world, a world near to us as it was to him, and nearer than the world of the senses.

Different as was his world from ours, still occasionally, in our best moments, we all catch glimpses of the world of Christ. When we feel sorrow at our wrong-doings, when we blush and feel degraded before the meanness of our thoughts, the selfishness of our motives, the depravity of our desires, when we long for the inward security which this world does not give us, or when the contemplation of some heroic deed or man sets our hearts in a glow and causes our eyes to fill with tears, then the veil is raised a little, and the sensations we experience at these times are the realities of that other world coming in contact with us, pressing upon our inmost hearts. Then do we receive significant hints, too significant to be neglected or mistaken, that there are things not dreamed of even, while we slumber in the lap of the world, interests which cannot be estimated, and in comparison with which our temporal concerns, passionately as we cling to them, are things foreign and strange to us. Then we may see, if we will, that we are in a majestic invisible world, a world which God animates by his eternal rectitude and love, even as the outward frame of things is supported by his power. Then do we catch sight of those awful and irreversible laws, which convert the man who obeys them into a God, by which whosoever falls on them is broken, and on whomsoever they fall, they will grind him to powder. This is the new world — old things pass away, all things become new; the world of moral truth, and spiritual light, and religious principles, whose inhabitants look at things not in their accidental relations, not as they appear to human pride and passion, not as they are connected with personal prejudices and temporary interests, but exactly as they are,

in nature and truth. Christ, I say, lived and moved and had his being in that world. And of course he regarded not the person of any man, but the inner nature of all men. The poor, the outcast, from whose bare touch the sanctimonious Pharisee shrank with abhorrence, commanded his divinest sympathy. For the lowest he was ready to sacrifice himself to the uttermost, counting it all joy and honor. For in the lowest he saw a spiritual nature mysteriously and most intimately related to the Almighty Spirit, and waiting to be clothed upon with an uncreated glory. Dwelling among spiritual realities, he looked up to those spiritual heights, the everlasting mountains which man is fashioned to ascend, and down into the depths of spiritual loss in which he may fall ; and these things it was, that caused him to stand all unmoved and triumphant before the terrible cross. Bodily suffering and death, these huge evils as they look to us, dwindled, in his view, back to their native littleness, in comparison with the degradation and death of the divine soul. And all that the world offers to bless us with, was but dust to the priceless pearl of a pure spirit, a commanding conscience, a lowly and loving heart. Not in ease and plenty, but in a holy mind, in a spiritual condition, here was life. This gained, all was gained. This was wealth, this was success, this was victory, this was power in his world. Having this, though poor and persecuted, he ascended up high over all the earth, and gave gifts unto men with a most royal bounty. Such was the world in which Christ lived. Thus did things look to him. In a word, this was the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, which he preached, in view of which he called upon men to amend their lives, for it was at hand. It was in him and around him. He carried it with him, and was himself a radiant centre of that invisible sphere, that eternal world, into which he came to lead men ; not a far off state of being beyond the grave and the sky, but comprehending the grave and the sky and all things visible and invisible within it,



a celestial condition here and now, within the reach of every one of us.

Friends, brothers, sisters, it is the will of God manifest in our very being and conscience, in our heart and flesh, that we too should be, and always be, in this heavenly world with Jesus and with God. We cannot be out of it. As our visible structure fits us to reside in this visible world, so does our inner nature fit us for this divine existence. We are here upon the threshold of it. The golden gates stand close before us this very hour. To enter, is to be born again; it is the new birth, regeneration, the passing from death unto life, the escape from that law of condemnation which dooms us to perpetual anxiety, into a condition of perfect peace, from a fathomless sea of darkness and storms to the firm land.

There is not one of us, I know, who does not wait and pray for this blessed change. When your minds are bewildered, and you are involved in those exhausting struggles which the unregulated and the earth-bound can never escape; when you see the right, but have no will, no strength, to resist the wrong; when custom and habit chain you down, and the sovereign good that you desire shines afar off like a star, as bright and as unapproachable; then the soul within you mourns, and cries, "O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!" And then, perhaps, you look down into the grave and envy the quiet sleepers there, and long for the hour that shall summon you to take your place at their side. Alas! alas! for you, if you have lost your faith in heaven, if you can see no peace but in the grave. For if you go to that resting-place unregenerate and anxious, you must awake from that slumber as ill at ease as ever, and though you put off this garment of flesh a thousand times, your soul will still be waiting to be born again. Enter heaven now, then. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Heaven is here, in that condition in which Jesus dwelt, in

recognizing the sacredness and supremacy of the soul and the soul's law, in the possession of those spiritual treasures, justice, mercy, humility, those things of heaven. Then God with all his glory will be with you, and you with God. Herein you will find deliverance, eternal peace and joy.

But how can we attain to this state? How can we get into this divine and imperishable world, this haven of rest, this place where is fulness of light, and joys that are forevermore? This is the question of questions, of which men, in all times and places, have sought the answer. Over the face of the whole earth, the myriads of our race, busy, running to and fro, in ever restless motion, impelled by a power which they cannot comprehend, have lost their way and are seeking to find it. Encompassed by evils manifold, by clouds and darkness broken only here and there by an uncertain light, and beset by frightful phantoms of their own creation, anxious, bewildered in the search, they have recourse to many magic and superstitious arts, and think to find the way from darkness into light, from this world to a better, as if it were some hidden spring or buried treasure, by the observance of mystical forms. Accordingly we find great nations bowing down amidst clouds of incense and streams of blood before idols, as if they expected the stony lips to part and declare the way of life. Others, again, are prostrate, not in body but in mind, before an invisible idol of the imagination, some grotesque form of thought, some unintelligible combination of sacred words, some dogma of theology, which they fondly believe will dissipate their darkness and reveal the path which they seek. Here one suddenly cries: "I have found it. The spirit of the invisible God has revealed it. Lo! here is the way, the only true way." While another shouts as confidently: "Lo! there. Come, follow me. All other paths lead only into deeper darkness." And then they begin to dispute, and de-

nounce, and the discord grows fierce, and the sword is drawn, and the traces of the true way are obliterated by blood. And many give over the search in despair, and would fain laugh the whole matter to scorn.

But it is not so with you, brethren. You know and are persuaded that the heavenly kingdom is within you, that it is the only world worth living in. Still you, too, are in search of the way. Near as the good we seek is to us, still we are sometimes confused not a little by the distracting din of conflicting authorities, and the strong chains of custom and habit; and ten thousand opposing influences hold us back, and it seems—so few are they, who enter the divine life—it seems as if there were an impassable gulf between us and heaven, so that even if it lay, as so many think, beyond the stars, it could hardly be more difficult of access by any power we can command.

It is true, it does seem hard, very hard to obtain possession of that peace, which filled the heart of Jesus even while it was breaking on the cross. There seems to be some mighty unknown power standing before the gates of life, barring man's entrance. We are bidden to knock and the gates will fly open, but our arms are paralyzed, and we knock only feebly, or waste our strength in the air; and thousands live and die wandering in this outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and life becomes to them a sorrow and a burthen, which the mocking solaces of a worldly state cannot lighten, but only increase.

Since these things are so, as I have spoken of the kingdom of Heaven, let me speak in the next place of the way into the eternal life. This is the subject of this discourse,—the kingdom of Heaven and the way into it. The way to heaven, notwithstanding all contradiction and controversy, notwithstanding the sects and the churches, is very plain and simple; so plain, that the wonder after all is, that sun after

sun, as it rises, still finds us lingering amidst the shadows and darkness of our mortal state.

Behold, then, you have consciences to distinguish right from wrong, the eternal from the temporary, the heavenly from the earthly. You have — let me use the despised phrase — that “inward light,” whose authority is never more fully admitted than when it is denied, for without this master of light of all our seeing, how can we affirm or deny anything? If the light that is within us is darkness, how deep is our darkness! You are not stocks and stones, you have warm, living hearts in your bosoms, fashioned to beat in accord with the heavenly things, justice and mercy. And the multitude of human sufferings and wrongs, how mightily do they appeal to us! In breaking the chains of evil, the peace of heaven shall flow into your souls. The ministry of Humanity, engage in that, and in the very engagement you enter into the celestial state. The existence of evil is a great mystery. I am no metaphysician, and I could not solve this mystery, even if I were. But I declare to you, it more than half vanishes from before my mind, when I see how evil opens the door of heaven. In simple obedience to the natural dictates of humanity, in pity and love, in laboring to abate and abolish the evil that awakens our human sympathies, we come to know the transcendent worth, the ravishing quality of the good. In our conflict with evil, the glory of those principles which are the attributes of God, the foundations of the earth and the pillars of heaven, is revealed, and we have an inward, heart-knowledge of their reality and greatness. When we speak, or when we silently act against cruelty and wrong, we find ourselves in the vicinity of the eternal substance, the soul of all religion, the fountain of life and light. Are you greatly bewildered at times, well nigh lost amidst the thick clouds that darken this mortal state? Is death appalling? Is sin mighty? Is habit too strong for you? Are you utterly cast down in the consciousness of your



weakness, longing for power which you have not? God hath shown thee, O man, what is good. Listen to the voice, familiar as it may be, of our common humanity. Give your hearts, as they are waiting and longing to be given, freely, utterly to the ever present work of man's deliverance from the despotism of evil. Speak out, as your hearts bid you, for your poor brother man and your poor sister woman. In feeling with them and for them, you will learn the heavenliness of justice and mercy, you will find that you have something on your hands and in your hearts, which is of imperishable stuff. You will know, as you never can know otherwise, that life is not all a mocking shadow, that there is something real and solid in this great universe, not far from every one of us, something worth living for, something that will communicate to you a sense of security that passes all understanding, something that will nerve your arm, although hosts encamp around you, and will bid you hope forever!

But refuse to avail yourself of the opportunity, which is afforded you to learn the divineness of humanity and love; take counsel of your love of ease; hug your darling prejudices, and let them be your comforters; let the cries of the friendless and the wronged come up to your ears in vain;—and you shut and bar the gates of heaven. You may live on for a while, walking in the vain show. But when the hour of trial comes, as it will come, when you need a rock and a refuge, you will find none. Words, mere words, will then avail you nothing. In the day when your heart was flushed with the hope of success, you fancied that words, empty professions, were sufficient to worship God with, but in your hour of bitterness you will crave something substantial, and where shall it be found? It is not in you. You can have no faith in an omnipotent Rectitude, an omnipresent, all-animating, all-conquering spirit of Love, for you have never known the power of these divine principles in yourself. They have had no

meaning for you. They were hollow names, vague generalities, lifeless abstractions. You have never known how real they were, you have had no taste of their divinity. The world and its barbarian customs and opinions, flying directly in the face of eternal right, — *these* you have believed in. You have submitted to the authority, you have felt the power of these, and these must comfort and bind up your heart when it is breaking, if they can.

I pray you, friends, consider this matter. It deserves, if there is aught dear to you, it deserves your best consideration. Unless we yield obedience to the sacred dictates of humanity, we can have no enjoyment of heaven, no knowledge of God. God is Love. We must know love, know it by the victory it wins in us and over us, or we cannot know God. God alone is. He is. All other things exist only by him. He is the only substance. The rocks are wearing away. The earth is crumbling under our feet. The visible heavens are rolling together over our heads. Human life is a dream, and centuries pass like a tale that is told. But God, I say, is. He alone is. If then we would be, if we would know ourselves to be standing on a solid rock, we must know God, and by a living experience of those eternal things which are of the essence and spirit of God. Justice, love, holiness, humility, our hearts must have these, and these our hearts. The cause of humanity, the cause of the poor and the benighted, the despised and the enslaved, this is the way to God and heaven. And they who set themselves against the pride and prejudice which harden the heart, and prevent man from acting a brother's part towards his suffering brother man, they would lead us into the eternal kingdom. Not for the civil privileges, the political rights of others, do they plead, but for the glorious liberty of the sons of God, that it may be ours; for the kingdom of Heaven, that it may come in power and great glory, and that this world with its darkness and corruption may pass away, melted in the fervent heat of divine truth and love.

their sins, is a work which an evangelist *must* do. His work as an evangelist cannot be done without it. Indeed it *is* his work, — the beginning, but not the end of it. The mind must be *informed* that the life may be *reformed*.

But, how difficult a work this is, of showing to a people their sins, — *their* sins I say, not another people's — you, my Brother, after your own experience, and your observation of the experience of some of your fellow-laborers in the Christian ministry, need not to be informed, and can hardly need to be reminded. This is a difficult work, whether the sinners, to whom he ministers, be few, or whether they be many. Are they few? Is there but a single adulterer, or gambler, or drunkard, in the congregation; and does the preacher denounce the sin *of* either of these? Behold, the cry is — “He is personal!” If he holds his peace till the contagion spreads, and the corruption seizes a tithe or a moiety of his flock, and he then lifts up his voice against the *popular* sin, lo! the cry then is — “He is imprudent! He has made war with ten thousand men, upon a king who cometh against him with twenty thousand!” In the one case, the sin must be let alone because it is so weak. In the other, because it is so strong. There, the preacher was *unfair*, to meddle with such a little sin; here, he is *unwise*, to cross the track of such a large one. It was unmanly, to crush the cockatrice's egg. It is fool-hardy, to disturb the brood, when they are hatched and hissing around him!

What, then, *shall* be done? Shall the “generation of vipers” be allowed, undisturbed, to “increase and multiply and replenish the earth”? May not “the seed of the woman bruise the serpent's head,” lest peradventure, it writhe itself around the bruiser's heel? Or must the viperous brood be let alone, till “the wisdom of the serpent” himself shall discover and disclose a way in which he may be attacked and destroyed entirely to his own satisfaction, or till some moral mesmerism shall be found out, under

whose influence every fang may be extracted without one threatening or one remonstrating hiss? To ask these questions, is to answer them. Sin was never yet exposed in a way to please itself. Nor was a man ever yet shown to be a sinner, in a way that met his own entire approbation. Yet is this a work for an evangelist to do ; and every true evangelist will do it, prepared to abide the consequences. In this great, but difficult field of labor, then, my Brother, I solemnly charge you to “do the work of an evangelist.”

The First Great Evangelist came, too, “to comfort those who mourn.” This is a more pleasant part of an evangelist’s duty. Your own sympathetic spirit will prompt you to this duty, and your own large experience, among the abodes of affliction, want, and sorrow, will guide you in the successful performance of it. Such ministrations are grateful to a gentle and loving heart. They are the pleasantest part of a preacher’s duty. Faithfulness here is always met with a kind recognition, though sometimes with unuttered — because unutterable thanks. But in those of an evangelist’s walks, on which the sunshine of love and gratitude falls, it is not necessary, that one charge you that you be often found. The danger, in most cases, is, that those walks will be frequented, to the forsaking of such as call out the sterner qualities of the spirit, and the severer virtues and trials of the evangelist’s life.

One of these walks, — and one which is especially thrown open before the evangelist, in these our days, is, that, in which the preacher of the Gospel is brought into contact, and fellowship with others of his profession. Indulge me, my younger brother, in a few thoughts upon this point, which, I am aware, will not be received with favor by the great majority of our brethren in the ministry. They will probably say, that, in uttering them, “I speak as a fool.” And if it be even so, “yet as a fool, hear me.”

It appears to me that, in these our days, and among the brethren of our denomination, there has been introduced a



new test of discipleship ; a new criterion, by which to decide the question whether, or not, a man is a Christian ; and, if he be a minister, whether he be entitled to the fellowship and countenance of Christian ministers. This is —not that he love the brethren ; not that the spirit of Christ be in him ; not that he receive the words of Jesus as the truth ; not that he order his life according to the spirit and the life of Jesus ; but that he believe all that those, who have taken in hand to set forth a “ declaration ” of the *wonderful works* of Jesus, have said or written in regard to *them*. In other words, that though I admit as true all that Jesus taught, I cannot be a Christian, unless, at the same time, I believe that it was *proved* to be true, by miraculous evidence.

With great respect, yet with equal earnestness, I would ask our brethren who assume this as the test of discipleship, and brand their fellows, and their equals in knowledge and Christian graces, as deists and infidels, if they do not sustain this test, — on *what ground*, or by *what authority* they assume it ? Do they assume it on the ground of *necessity*,—a necessity resulting from the nature of things ? A miracle is usually defined to be, “ a violation, counteraction, or suspension of a law of nature.” The laws, usually, if not uniformly, thus suspended or violated by miraculous agency, are those of physical nature ; and the end which it is the object of the miracle to subserve, is to bring man to a nearer conformity to the laws of his *moral* nature. Are we to be told, then, that there is such an essential antagonism between the physical and the moral laws of God, that it is *necessary* to violate the former, that the latter may be the better kept ? That men will the more faithfully observe the moral laws of God, the more clearly they have seen, or the more firmly they believe, that his physical laws have been suspended or broken ? Must we, *on the ground of necessity*, believe this, before we can be Christians ? Or if this test, faith in the miraculous accounts of

the New Testament — is assumed, not on the ground of necessity, but on that of *authority*, then I ask, by *what* authority is it assumed? By the authority of Christ himself? Certainly not. According to “the disciple whom Jesus loved,”\* the Great Teacher wrought his wonderful works to overcome that unbelief, which his true words were not mighty enough to overcome; not to convince those whose minds were so open to the truth, and had so strong an affinity for it, as readily to receive it without them. Does any apostle of Jesus, any where say, that, “unless ye believe the narratives of the miraculous works of Jesus, ye cannot be his disciples?” Far from it. Not one of the apostles refers to any one of those narratives, for during the greater part of their preaching, not one of them was written. Is a belief of the miraculous accounts of the Evangelists, any where, in the sacred volume, recognised and proposed as a test of any man’s discipleship, or of his right to the Christian name, or to Christian fellowship? We all know that it is not. By what authority, then, I again demand, do I, or does any one, assume this, as a test of Christian faith or Christian character? The question in the present case, is not, whether or not the miraculous parts of the New Testament narratives are true; — but whether the belief that they are true is essential to the Christian character and name. It is not, whether you, my Brother, or whether I believe these narratives; for I believe in the miraculous works of Jesus, as do you also; but whether or not we *must* believe them or not be Christians. I had supposed that so far as belief constitutes a Christian, the Christian believer is “the believer in Jesus,” not necessarily the believer in either or in all of the Evangelists. Was Matthew crucified for us? or were we baptised into the name of Mark? Do I necessarily believe the

\* “Or else believe me *for the very works’ sake.*” John xiv. 11.  
 “Then said Jesus unto him, except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.” John iv. 48.

Gospel because I believe the miracles? or the miracles because I believe the Gospel? Is Christianity itself a *miracle*? Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, — a counteraction, suspension, or violation of a law of nature, either in physics or morals? We had thought that it was eternal truth, and in eternal *harmony* with all these laws.

But, even if we *must* believe a miracle, as a test of our Christian faith, and as a condition of our being received into Christian fellowship, is it not enough that we believe in the miraculous *virtue* of Jesus? And was not his virtue, his *goodness*, — his holiness and his love, — as miraculous — as truly divine, as was his *power*; receiving as literally true, all that his biographers have told us of that? Is not the *goodness* of God, even more nearly allied to his *truth*, than is his *power*? And if it be the object of a miracle, to bring us to a belief of divine *truth*, does not my faith in the divine *benevolence* of Jesus, bring me nearer to that truth, than does my faith in his divine *power*? Was there not seen more of the God and Father, in the miraculous *love* of Jesus, which all his professed disciples admit, than there was in his miraculous *power*, which some are constrained to doubt? Did not the life and death of Jesus “show us the Father,” more than did his touch, when he healed the sick, or his voice when he raised the dead? If, then, like the wicked and adulterous generation, whom Jesus addressed, *we* “seek after a sign,” a sign that the Great Teacher was “in the bosom of the Father,” — had the knowledge of his counsels, and was a partaker of his spirit, — we find that sign, not much in the miraculous *power* of Jesus, that appealed to the outward senses, as in the equally miraculous *virtue*, so that addressed itself to the highest faculties of the soul, and witnessed to them, that God was indeed with him; and that, as his life was so uniformly true, so also must be his words.

I earnestly charge you, then, my Friend and Brother, not to exclude from your fellowship any one who professes his

faith in the *words of Jesus*, even though he cannot believe all the *words of other men* concerning his wonderful works. Those works are not the Gospel, even granting that the story of them is all literally true. Still less is the *story* of those works the Gospel; else did not Jesus preach his own Gospel, but left it for others to publish to the world, long after He had finished his work, and had had a name given him therefor, "that is above every name."

Let those of us whose faith, in the doctrines of Jesus, is so weak that it needs a miracle to hold it up, take the miracle, and let their faith lean, and their Christian hopes depend upon *it*. But let us not deny the Christian name, and Christian fellowship, to a brother, who tells us that *his* faith needs no such aid; and who shows the world that it is strong enough to stand, and to "work by love" without it.

Do, then, my brother, the work of an evangelist, yourself; and should you, while doing it, see one casting out the demons of ignorance, superstition, bigotry and sin, in the name of the same Jesus, in whose name we are laboring to cast them out, forbid him not because he followeth not us, in every article of our faith; for no man can do these works in the name of our common Master, and speak lightly of him. Show not an exclusive spirit, even though others should exclude you, because you will not. Be true to your own convictions both in doctrine and in duty. Do what you may to bring others into the same fold with yourself, rather than to shut them out; and you will be sustained, in your labors, by the knowledge that you are walking in the steps, and, at their close, by the hope that you have secured the approbation of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

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That what I have now been saying is God's own truth, that the just and merciful man is in the right way to the kingdom of Heaven, and not far from it, our whole nature, reason and conscience, bear witness. But, in the bountiful Providence of God, the verification of the divine fact has been completed in Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ, this eldest brother of our race, this first-born of the celestial household, in what he was in himself, we have a commanding vision of the everlasting kingdom. So that we may say, in the grand language of the Apostle Paul: "He, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shone into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (and of heaven, the dwelling-place of God and of the Son) "in the face of Jesus Christ:" as that face, transfigured by the indwelling spirit, was changed into a mirror of the invisible world, when Jesus turned his beaming eyes upon little children and laid his hands on them in prayer, or when he looked with sacred pity upon the weeping penitent and said, "Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace;" or when he cast that look, still full of affection, upon the faithless disciple; or amidst the streaming blood and mortal sweat of the cross, raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" All these incidents — the whole history of Christ, showing us what he was, shows us God, opens to us a divine condition, and our hearts are bathed in the beauty of things un-earthly and eternal. Thus Christ is to me, as nothing else is, the door, the way; the true way, because in his spiritual influence he corresponds to the truth of things, to the realities of my nature and every man's nature. And he is the living way, because the sense of divine things, created in us by him, is not derived from anything dead, the *dead* letter of a book, but from a life, the fresh, breathing life of a being God-created, God-inspired.

Now as Christ is thus the way to heaven, as the divine life is made visible and brought near to us in the person of Christ, it follows that it is of great importance that Christ should be

known clearly and distinctly. We should endeavour to ascertain as precisely as we may what manner of person Christ was ; because if there was nothing extraordinary in him, if he was an ordinary man, if the great things told of him are fables, then we lose the bright vision of heaven which is afforded us in him, and he gives us no special insight into the eternal kingdom. We may heap high-sounding titles upon him, and make his name only another name for all manner of excellence, but we gain nothing. He creates in us no new and divine ideas of the unseen and everlasting life. But if, as I believe, he was a man most wonderfully endowed, a man who stands high and alone, by himself amidst all the generations of men, in respect to his original gifts, his native powers, then, I say, it is of the greatest importance that we should see him just as he was. It is essential to a just knowledge of his character, to a right appreciation of those spiritual qualities of his, in which we discern the features of the invisible world. Whatever he did, being his act, illustrates his character, reveals his spiritual nature, shows us what he was, and how he felt. In this light, in their relation to him, those extraordinary things attributed to him interest me greatly, as much certainly, if not more than his words. They unfold and manifest his spirit. They open his inmost heart to me. And the more profoundly I appreciate his spirit, the more complete is the revelation which I have of God and heaven in him. The wonderful works of Jesus are not interesting to me in any other point of view. They are not specially interesting, I mean, as mere instances of extraordinary power. You know that it is everywhere taught, that the miracles recorded in the history of Christ were wrought to attest his divine mission and authority. But I want a far higher attestation of the authority of Christ, than that which is afforded by an outward miracle, a mere demonstration of power addressed to the eye. Had he uprooted mountains, had he moved the earth out of its place, it would not have sufficed me. For I want the witness of the spirit. I want evidence, not that there was

an extraordinary, superhuman power outwardly co-operating with Christ, but that there was a divine spirit in him, that he had a new and transcendent generosity of purpose, that there was a divine depth of humanity in him, such as had never before been opened to the world. Let me have evidence of this, let me see that he was inspired by an intensity of affection for truth and right altogether unprecedented, and then I recognise a divine authority in him, and every word of his outweighs the world in value. Goodness is always invested with authority, with divine authority. It commands the hearts of men. It reigns not by the accident of birth, not by human election, but by the grace of God, and men are born to do it homage. Let us, therefore, see this divine thing, let us see it dwelling in Christ, in God-like completeness and serenity, and instantly we bow before him as the hereditary king and guide of the world. What though he utters truths with which the ears of men have been familiar from the beginning of the world, what though he only repeats the ancient law of Love, the law which Moses promulgated, and which was written of old upon the very hearts of men by the finger of God, still it comes to us with an unearthly authority, with a divine force, when it issues from his holy lips. Let me see in him an extraordinary measure of virtue, faith, and truths already sacred are made doubly sacred. Every word of his is consecrated to our ears, and sounds like a new truth, and reveals new depths of meaning, and is a voice from the holy of holies. This is the authority which I look for in Christ, and which I find in him. I can ask for no higher. I can conceive of no higher. It is the authority of God, which lies not in physical power, but in his absolute goodness.

This now is what I say. The extraordinary things attributed to Christ, his miracles, reveal to me his spiritual greatness. They show his spirit in action. And in the fact that they harmonize with his spirit, that, instead of obscuring his character as they would if they were fables, they throw light upon it, and disclose it in all the angel



beauty of its proportions, I see the evidence of these truths. Extraordinary as were the effects which Christ produced by his word and his touch, the most wonderful thing by far is his perfect singleness and majesty of action. The power he possessed, singular as it was, gives proof of being a natural power by its whole method of operation. It is instinct with the genius of nature, the inspiration of God. Where shall I find words to express the sense I have of the profound naturalness of the character of Christ, in the very respect in which it is usually considered supernatural. Through his miracles I look into the very heart of him, and learn how profoundly generous he was, and catch an entrancing vision of God and of heaven. When I observe how that great nature surrendered all its greatness to the simple demands of human compassion, how he lived to give, and not to receive, how he laid that crown of blinding glory at the feet of our poor, ignorant, despised humanity, he commands my deepest sympathy, and I know that he is my nearest relative under God. Take away from him this part of his history, and you immediately remove him from me, and the revelation grows dim. Herein consists the value of his extraordinary works. They are manifestations of Christ, of the depth and divineness of his sympathy with our flesh. We discover in him, as in no one else, what the nature of man is, what it is capable of. He causes all our human sympathies to thrill and glow with a new life. Once catch sight of Christ as his spirit is visible through his great works, and heaven and earth are unveiled. A new sacredness invests our human relations, and our social relations shine with an unearthly splendor. We can no longer confine religious duty to the church and the sabbath. We lose all respect for that religion which dwells among formalities, and occupies itself with words. The world is our temple, not built with hands, eternal and in the heavens. Life is the religious service, the true Miserere, the resounding Te Deum, and the sweat of honest labor is the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and the hand



extended to lift up those that are bowed down, to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and liberate the slave — that is the hand which is raised in prayer, and in that hand is placed the omnipotence of God.

It is often objected that, by ascribing special and extraordinary powers to Christ, we cut him off from the sympathies of the common human heart, which no longer knows how to estimate a being so peculiarly endowed. On the contrary, it seems to me, that it is the man who has no gifts, who is cut off from our sympathies. His heart is hidden, locked up, and he has no means of making himself known. The possession of peculiar powers enables a man to come nigh unto us, to pour his very soul into us. Your friend may have gifts far superior to yours. He may be able to do with the greatest ease what is as much beyond your ability as the working of any miracle. Are you put at a distance from him by this difference? If he pride himself on his superiority, he may repulse you by his pride, and then you do not care to sympathize with him. You look upon him with a pity, which all your admiration of his genius only increases. On the other hand, if he bear himself in all meekness, if he forget himself in the use of his advantages, so far from being separated, you are brought nearer to him; and it is his peculiar powers, that help to strengthen and draw close the tie of relationship between him and you. The whole history of the world illustrates the truth of what I say. The world has always sympathized most especially with its great men. And it was because they were great, because they had extraordinary endowments, that they have touched the hearts of the humblest so deeply. Their gifts have afforded them power and opportunity for the manifestation of that common humanity, which makes the whole world new. Such being the case, if we are capable of sympathizing with Christ at all, we are capable of sympathizing with him more intimately than with any other partaker of our common nature, for this very reason, because his powers were

so singularly great. They enabled him to put forth a so much larger measure of that spirit of humanity, by which alone we can sympathize with others at all, and which attracts and chains the heart.

Thus, as I have sought to show, Christ is the way, and the door, a revelation of the spirit. He that hath seen him, hath seen the Father, and need never ask, Show us the Father. He who seeth him, seeth heaven, that unseen world, that everlasting kingdom. He is a living revelation. And from him we learn, not to do or to wish to do the same things that he did, but what we do, to do it with a Christ-like freedom, singleness and power. The way to heaven is in the heart, and he hath shown us the way. It is laid open in him, and so is it revealed in all. His individual being, his personal life, that is the cardinal fact in the history of the world. That harmonizes all things, and life is no longer a formless chaos, but a celestial sphere. Blessed are they who receive this fact in all its enlightening and regenerating power! Grace is with them, and power and life, and that divine peace which passeth all understanding! They reign forever in the kingdom of God.

One word more. There is a gracious Providence over us, never doubt that. The spirit of the heavenly world, the spirit of truth and of God, is blowing around us like the wind, invisible, mysterious like the air. We cannot tell whence it comes nor whither it goes. But it is coming and going evermore in all parts of the earth, in every human bosom. As we are here, so God is here. Recognise this living presence, and holy desire, prayer will be kindled within you, and prayer is a key of heaven, which will unlock the treasures of wisdom and good hid in Christ. Prayer is the strength of the soul. And through prayer God descends, and we are gently translated as on angels, wings, from death into life, from earth to heaven.

## CHARGE.

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BY REV. JOHN PIERPONT, OF TROY, N. Y.

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MY FRIEND AND BROTHER : —

The office, to which, on this occasion, you have called me, I know not how I can better perform than by addressing to you a single sentence of apostolic wisdom and authority —

“ *Do the work of an Evangelist.*”

Within the small circle of this sentence, lies the whole field of those duties, upon which you do, this day, publicly enter. And all that I propose to do now is to follow out this apostolic precept, and observe its bearing, upon the practical realities by which, in this, your new position, you will find yourself surrounded.

“The work of an evangelist,” — what is it? Before we can answer this question with the certainty that our answer is right, we must see what was the work of the *first* Evangelist, the great Exemplar, to whom all others should be conformed. That work was distinctly stated by the angel that, in a dream, appeared to his father, before he had come into the world. “He shall be called Jesus, (a saviour) because he shall *save his people from their sins.*” It was as distinctly stated by one of his apostles, after he had left the world. “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.”

The work of the First Great Evangelist, we thus see,

was strictly, yea and exclusively, a work of *moral reform*. It was not to save the neck of his nation from the Roman yoke. That yoke his people had worn long before his birth, and wore still more gallingly, long after his death. It was not to save his people from the wrath, nor yet from the justice of God. For the wrath of God is but another name for his justice, and his justice is but the handmaid of his love. And from this, God forbid that any man should ever be saved. It was from *Sin* that the Great Evangelist is a Jesus, a Saviour, to all who by him are saved. And *sin* is any, yea and every, "transgression of the law" of man's social or religious nature. It was from every man's *iniquities*, from his every form and fact of *in-equity*, — from every thing unjust, unequal, untrue, unrighteous or wrong, — that He, whom you, my brother, are to follow, was to *bless* his people by turning *them*, yea, every one of them, away. But this is strictly and exclusively a work of *moral reform*.

True, Jesus was to be, and he was, a Teacher, — "a Light, to lighten the nations." But he *taught* as a *means* of *reforming* the world. His work as a teacher was preparatory to his work as a reformer. His every instructive and enlightening word, was a *means*, for the accomplishment of his great *end*. This was, to bring back to it every man who had erred and strayed from the *right* way. Of course he *must* point out, to the wanderer, the error of his way; must show him wherein he was wrong; must demonstrate to him that his course was a departure from the right path. If he would reconcile man to God, by bringing the human will into harmony with the divine, he must, as matter of indispensable and stern necessity, show man what the mind and will of God is, and wherein his own will, as witnessed by his own ways, hath been opposed to it. In one prophetic word, he must "*show* his people their sins." Nor was this word, nor is it to this day, more prophetic than it is imperative. This showing to a people of



## RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

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BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE, OF BOSTON.

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THE part, my brother, which by your request and that of your church has been assigned to me to-day, is usually performed in the name of the churches assembled in Council. This society has seen fit to dispense with such an Installing Council; as by the highest Congregational law and the oldest Congregational precedent, it has an undoubted right to do. The Cambridge Platform, adopted by the General Court of Massachusetts in 1648, and by a synod of Churches in 1680, and ever regarded as the highest authority in all matters of church usage and discipline, distinctly declares that churches may ordain their ministers without a council. In fact, *nothing is said about a Council of churches* for ordination or for Installation. The method laid down for ordination is as follows, which I quote at length from the Platform, on account of the sound and liberal views which it expresses.

“Ordination we account nothing else, but the solemn putting a man into his place and office in the church, whereunto he had right before by election; being like the installing of a magistrate in the commonwealth.

“The essence and substance of the outward calling of an ordinary officer in the church, does not consist in his ordination, but in his voluntary and free election by the church, and his accepting that election.

“Ordination doth not constitute an officer, nor give him the essentials of his office.”

“In such churches, where there are elders, imposition of hands in ordination is to be performed by those elders.

“In such churches where there are no elders, imposition of hands may be performed by some of the brethren, orderly chosen by the church thereunto. For if the people may elect officers, which is the greater, and wherein the substance of the office doth consist, they may much more, occasion and need so requiring, impose hands in ordination, which is the less, and but the accomplishment of the other.” (*Platform, Chap. ix. § 2, 3, 4.*)

In the next section (§ 5,) of the same chapter of the Platform, it is admitted in a very guarded manner, that, under certain circumstances, the elders of other churches may impose hands in ordination.

The method, therefore, which is adopted to-day, of calling in the ministers of other churches without a council, to assist in ordination; and the method lately adopted by two of the Boston churches, of ordaining their minister themselves without any foreign aid; are the only methods recognized by the highest Congregational authority in New England.

But although I cannot offer you the Right Hand of Fellowship in behalf of any council of particular churches, — I can and do offer it in behalf of our churches generally, in behalf of the true church universal, and on my own account as a Christian brother and friend.

Christian Fellowship! These words express a great idea. But how imperfectly is it understood and practised. Many suppose it to mean an agreement in opinion and form of doctrine. To offer Christian fellowship is with them to

offer them intellectual sympathy. Others intend by it agreement in forms, and cannot fellowship those who do not belong to their church and adopt their ordinances.

To us, my brother, Christian Fellowship means something far deeper than this. It means union and co-operation in the pursuit of the highest aims. It means sympathy with all who are ready to do the work of God, to bear witness to the truth, to be about their Father's business, to say in daily act as in daily prayer, "Thy kingdom come." Whoever will battle by our side against selfishness and sin, in the cause of truth and humanity, is with us, and we must have fellowship with him. I cannot exclude from my fellowship any one who is pursuing this aim. And if any one says, "I cannot understand how any one can be a Christian who does not believe in the Deity of Christ, and the doctrine of vicarious atonement," I reply, "It is not your business to understand *how* he can be a Christian, hut to see whether he *is* one." If he says, "I do not see *how* a man can be a Christian who does not believe in miracles or in the supernatural character of Christ," I reply again, "Neither can I perhaps—but it is not our business to see *how* he can be one, but to see if he be one. By their fruits ye shall know them. Does he bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

But while, on the one hand, we are thus willing to co-operate with those who differ most widely from the usual forms of Christianity, let us not be provoked into a spirit of hostility toward those whose views are narrower than our own, and who may conscientiously consider themselves bound to denounce and excommunicate. Let us not return the spirit of exclusion with the spirit of contempt, which as has lately been well said, "is but a more profound exclusion."\* Let us not exclude the

\* "Letter to the so-called Boston Churches," a very timely and valuable Essay.

excluders. If we believe that we stand on higher ground than they, and that we breathe a freer air, let us show it by the uprightness of our carriage. Let us not look at the little annoyances about our feet, but at the vast horizon which rise, widely around us and before us, with its "pale and clear and solemn distances." Let us not be thinking of what the Rev. Mr. This or That is saying of us in his little circle, but rather of what God may be saying of us among his angels. He has set our feet in a large place,

"cælumque tueri  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

One other thing I would say to you, my brother, in relation to Christian Fellowship. If it should come to pass, though I expect no such thing, in these times when every thing is shifting and unstable, that by some sudden change, the tide of brotherly sympathy should recede, and leave us high and dry, alone, separated from our brethren;—let us meet that destiny like men. Let us not complain of being persecuted—let us not regard ourselves as martyrs. If we believe that we have the Truth, and that it is because of our fidelity to any true principle that we are thus alone, let us thank God and take courage. Jesus does not commiserate his disciples, but congratulates them on being left left thus solitary for Truth's sake. "*Blessed* are ye, when men shall persecute you, and separate themselves from your company, and cast out your names as evil, for my sake and the Gospel's. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad!*" For the great treasure of Truth, let us gladly pay the price; and not be like children who retain their money in one hand, while they hold out the other for the plaything or the fruit. If the Lord of Hosts should ever call us to the high honor of being in the forlorn hope of the advanced guard of his armies, marching to the assault of the fortresses of error, let us be satisfied with that honor. Those who seventy years ago, crossed this hill in the early morning twilight, hastening to lay



down their lives on the eminence beyond in their country's cause, went not complaining but rejoicing. Let us, in a better cause, be as brave as they.

“What though thou liest upon the dust  
When those around thee flee for fear;  
Die full of hope and manly trust,  
Like those who fell in battle here.”

It is said that the Right Hand of Fellowship is very apt to run into a Charge — and naturally, for love and admonition are twin brothers. But I wish to admonish myself as well as you, for I think that we all are tempted to complain too much of being persecuted. We, as Unitarians, have sometimes talked about being persecuted, and made sectarian capital out of it, when it would have been more manly and noble to have gone quietly on, and said nothing about it. I have formerly made these complaints, but I am ashamed of it, and hope never to do so again.

And now, my brother, what remains, but to offer you again my right hand, as the token of my own personal sympathy and friendship. This is not the first time that we have taken each other by the hand. Many recollections make this hour interesting to us. Companions in youth, in study and recreation we have taken sweet counsel together, and often also have we gone to the house of God in company. For you and I had the happiness of being in intimate relations with that wise and venerable man, who having had the courage in his youth to come forward as the open defender of an heretical faith, went calmly on his way, till in the evening of life he saw that heresy established as the predominant belief of the surrounding churches. We remember well his large liberality of sentiment, his disinterested love of humanity, his sagacious wisdom, his horror of all cant, more especially of the cant of liberality, his perfect integrity and truth, and his Christian humility in just proportion to his Christian elevation.

Amid such holy and blessed influences we passed our youth. Our work then led us in different directions. By various trials, in different scenes, we have been taken by the Providence of God, till, to-day, we stand together again. To-day I take you by the hand and pray that you may be abundantly prospered in this present sphere of labor. May many be brought to God by your means, and bless you for opening their eyes to the true value of life, and the true meaning of the Gospel. May the slave on the most distant plantation of the South be made happier by your efforts and prayers in this place for justice and freedom. And when you are laid in the grave, though no marble monument may rise over it, crowded on four sides with your praises, may the faithful feet of those whom you have comforted and blessed visit it day by day —

“ And childhood’s tears, like summer rain  
Quickened its dying grass again.”

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## ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY.

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BY REV. CALEB STETSON OF MEDFORD.

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CHRISTIAN BROTHERS AND SISTERS, —

I rejoice with you in the success which has thus far attended your efforts to establish a Gospel ministry, and in the prospects now opening before you. A flourishing town, just starting into existence with all the advantages of an old and highly cultivated community, is rapidly spreading itself over these smooth hills and quiet valleys. A young Society, full of hope and promise, is established on the broadest and most liberal principles of Primitive Christianity. A new and beautiful temple is dedicated to the worship of the one living God, and to the ministration of the Gospel of Peace and Universal Brotherhood. And to-day the Pastor of your choice comes to you, with the rich fruits of experience gathered in other fields of labor, and consecrates his mind, his heart and his life to your spiritual well-being.

He has received a solemn charge to “do faithfully the work of an evangelist,” — “to rebuke your sins,” — to labor for your redemption, — to prove himself here, in his relation to you, a good minister of Jesus Christ. It seems proper therefore that you should be charged to take heed

that nothing be wanting on your part to make his ministry effectual in building you up in the faith and righteousness of the Gospel.

Give him then your hearty sympathy. This, is an essential condition of his usefulness. He cannot do his work alone. Without your consent and co-operation his labors will be all in vain. In order to act with him, you must feel with him; make his aims, purposes and hopes your own. The true prosperity of a Religious Society results always from the joint action of the pastor and the people. They demand too much of him when they require him to do for them what they neglect to do for themselves. He cannot put his heart into his work and do his best unless he has assurance of an answering sympathy in theirs.

All men have their peculiar spiritual wants and trials, and many there are who complain, — with George Fox, the old Quaker Apostle, — that “no one does speak to their condition.” The fit word, that would come to them with electric force and send life and light into their souls, is never uttered in due season. Accordingly the ministry is often blamed when the fault lies in the other party, inasmuch as they have never sought to place themselves in a spiritual relation to their minister.

In the course of a long experience every pastor has often been astonished and grieved to find how little some of his hearers have understood and appropriated, of what he has for years been preaching. Occasionally he meets with one of this description, who is oppressed by anxieties, — by a sense of sin and spiritual want and alienation from God, — and the strength of his emotion breaks through his long reserve. He lays open his heart; his minister sees the facts of the case and is able to speak to his condition. One human soul has freely revealed to him its deepest experiences; and this has done him a good service, inasmuch as it has shown him what is passing in many other souls.

But how painful and discouraging it must be to find that,



in so many cases, his labor has hitherto been lost, — as if the divine seed had been scattered by the wayside, and the fowls of the air had devoured it. With a heavy heart he has to begin anew with the first rudiments of religious truth as if his disciple had to-day, for the first time, heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This darkness has so long brooded over him because he has hitherto regarded his pastor merely as the functionary of an Institution, ordained to preside over its rites and ceremonies, and not as the minister of his own soul. Never before has he felt his spiritual necessities and disorders. He has never hungered for the bread of life, and it has been to him but a stone.

Your minister may be earnest and devout, — he may have a profound sense of the wants and dangers of a weak, tempted, sinning man, struggling on through this tumultuous and passionate life, — yet he cannot appeal to you with effect unless you place yourselves in moral sympathy with him. He may hold up before you the character of Jesus, as the ideal of the divine life, his cross as the symbol of self-sacrifice, his truth as the power of God unto salvation, but he cannot show them to eyes that will not see. He may speak to you with an eloquence sweeter than angel-music, or more solemn than the deep thunder-bass, but he cannot reach your hearts through ears that will not hear.

His best study is the hearts of his people. There he finds materials for his discourses in the revelations of living experience, which are grand interpretations of the oracles of ancient wisdom. But how often is the book sealed up, — its deep mysteries of doubt, fear, conflict, sin, bitter self-reproach, withheld from his view. The physician is permitted only to look from a distance upon the face of his patient. If the Society individually are disposed to be formal and constrained in their intercourse with their minister, he will never find time to overcome their reserve and enter into an intimate communion with their souls. For his highest duty is with them as a whole. From week to week he must set before them collectively the results of

his study, meditation and experience. Preaching is his great function. If he fail in this, his failure, as to the great object of his life, is complete.

Accordingly a large part of his time must be devoted to the growth of his mind, the culture of his soul and his preparations for public service. He must moreover be always ready to attend to the calls of humanity, to visit the abodes of sickness and sorrow, to be an angel of consolation in those sad homes which the angel of death has made desolate. Make him then your soul's friend in your happiest hours, that he may be your soul's comforter in the day of "your swift and thick coming sorrows," when your hopes are blasted and your hearts are breaking. Then will he be indeed your spiritual Teacher and Guide,—the representative of Christ in all his divinity of peace, hope and power. But if you withhold from him this generous confidence,—if you meet him with a chilling reserve — if you are uneasy when conversation upon spiritual subjects, or upon any of the great interests of humanity is introduced, and hasten to change the topic,—then he can find no avenue to your hearts. He will never know how "to speak to your peculiar condition;" for he has not the facts of the case, and he is cut off from those resources which give life and power to the ministrations of the Pulpit. He will be driven, of course, to barren speculations and vague, cold generalities, which touch no sinful heart, wake no slumbering conscience.

Let me then Brothers and Sisters, repeat to each of you, as if alone with you face to face, that if you would have your minister sustain a living and spiritual relation to your own soul you must give him your sympathy and your confidence. Consider his work not more his than yours. When you need his counsel in your trials and difficulties do not wait for him to come to you, go at once to him and lay open your heart to him. Be not afraid of encroaching upon his time for such a purpose. An eminent minister of

the Gospel used to say, "the person who wants to see me is always the very person that I want to see." Encroaching upon his time! Why, what nobler use can he make of his time than to listen to the experiences of an anxious, struggling soul and assist it to find "the way, the truth, and the life? The revelations of the living, beating heart of humanity are better to him than whole libraries of theology. Rich are the lessons which come from domestic firesides, — from glad homes and sorrowful homes and all the realities and changes of many-colored life. Let your pastor have these, and they will teach him how to convert life into truth, learning into wisdom and love into power, and he will come to you with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ, — not with general statements with which no one feels personally concerned, — but with its searching application to the heart and to the actual life of man.

The knowledge which a minister derives from a free communion with his people supplies the deficiencies of his experience and the limitations of his own mind. It enlarges his sphere of thought. It is practical wisdom and practical power. It teaches him how to speak to their condition. "A word spoken in season," says the Psalmist of Israel, "how good it is." More than bread to the way-faring man in the hungry desert is that word of divine Wisdom and Love. It is the bread that cometh down from Heaven of which if a man eat he shall never die. Labor evermore for this bread of life, and ask freely of him who may help you to find it. Hide not the wants of your soul from him who will gladly be your soul's best friend, "the helper of your joy." If you cherish this warm and generous sympathy with him, you cannot be unmindful of your duties to him or to yourselves.

Let your sympathy then manifest itself in your respect for his independence. Encourage in him a manlike liberty in thought, word and deed. Take care that, as far

as you are concerned, he shall never feel himself hampered in his freedom, crippled in his strength or warped from his integrity by any external influence.

The tendencies of the time have given a new and peculiar importance to this topic. I have no doubt that a great majority of the members of all our religious societies are faithful to their ministers, and desire them to speak out their convictions boldly and plainly upon all subjects which interest them as ministers of Christ and members of the great brotherhood of man. There are however exceptions in almost every parish, few, perhaps, but not unimportant. I have observed with pain and apprehension a disposition in some quarters to narrow down the influence of the Pulpit, by insisting upon the exclusion of certain topics of agitating interest. It is not supposed that any Society will formally dictate to its minister as to what he shall, or shall not preach. Nevertheless, he may have unmistakable indications, that the introduction of a certain class of subjects will excite grave displeasure. This is much to be lamented on account both of minister and people. If he is a man of even common sensibility he finds himself in a painful dilemma. If he yields to the external pressure, he hurts his conscience and loses his self-respect. His spirit is cowed and broken, and he cannot hold up his head like a man. If he resists it, and acts out his ideas in obedience to his own great impulses, he does it at the risk of alienating some upon whom the usefulness of his ministry and the peace of his life greatly depend. And it is a bitter mockery to talk of his liberty of speech, if he must exercise it with a penalty like this hanging over his head.

It is believed by many, whose judgment is entitled to respect, that the social reforms, for which our age is remarkable, may be properly left to societies which have been organized for the special purpose of carrying them forward. I am not of this opinion. I believe that the influence of the Pulpit is wanted to give their movements the right di-



rection and tone. I believe that their action should be guided and hallowed by religion. They need the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They must not be allowed to set at nought or supersede its ordained ministries. The voice of one crying in the wilderness will be in vain, if it is not the har-binger of Christ. We should strenuously insist that the Pulpit *has no right* to abdicate so large a part of its functions in building up the kingdom of Christ in the world. And what is this kingdom but the reign of righteousness and love,—the dethroning of sin in all its forms,—the delivering of mankind from impurity, intemperance, war and slavery and all manner of oppressions and wrongs,—the reconstruction of society on the divine principles of Jesus?

The Church represents Christ ; and the Pulpit is the organ of the Church in its grand ministration to humanity in all ages. If therefore Christianity has anything to say to the private sins of individuals, or the sins of society organized in its institutions and laws, then the Pulpit has something to say ; and it must be free to say it. How it should be said, and when, and under what circumstances, must be left to the judgment and conscience of him who is responsible for his ministry to a higher power. The times undoubtedly demand a ministration of reform. Oppressed and outraged humanity, after many ages of neglected suffering, cries out at length for help at our hands, in tones of agony which will be heard.

And nothing could be more disastrous to any great interest of mankind, than to withdraw it from the jurisdiction of Christianity. Wherever man goes, to his business or pleasure, to the serene retreats of private life, or to the din and turmoil of public action, there the Pulpit should follow him with its solemn voice of warning, instruction and rebuke. I have no confidence in the genuineness or stability of any reformation, that has not its root in eternal and unchangeable principles, which it is the special office

of the Pulpit to interpret, to apply and to enforce. If its connection with the social movements of the age had been more general and more intimate than it has, there would, perhaps, have been less reason to complain of the manner and spirit in which they have sometimes been conducted. If the ministers of the Gospel of humanity hold their peace, no wonder that "the stones cry out," and things as hard and coarse cry out after their kind. Believing, as I do, that the Pulpit is the greatest organ of Christian truth in the world, I desire to see the field of its influence, not contracted within narrower bounds, but more and more enlarged until it takes in the whole life of humanity. And I have no sympathy, either with those who would limit its action and impair its power, or those who would destroy its reputation and put an end to its existence. If the subjects to which I have alluded are agitating in their character, if they have been improperly treated elsewhere, if bad passions have been exasperated by the discussion of them, it is all the more important that the ministers of Christ should endeavor to place them on a right basis, and guide the public mind to sound conclusions and a healthy action. And the people have a right to the benefit of their judgment, on points of action as well as on points of faith.

It is the duty of the ministry to expound the principles of Jesus, and apply them in all their strictness and comprehension to the individual lives of men and the organic life of society. By these, every community is to sit in judgment and pass verdict on its own usages. If there is any sin organized in its institutions the ministry must point it out and expose it, never ceasing to plead for humanity and right, until public sentiment, — the mighty invisible power behind all law, custom and institution, — is thoroughly changed and purified. But in order to do this the ministry must be free and brave. If Christianity has no liberty of utterance through its appointed organs, how shall it ever pervade the great heart of society, and direct the current

of opinion against the customs and laws in which time-hallowed iniquity has entrenched itself?

Finally, my friends, if you have this generous sympathy with your minister, you will give your earnest and respectful attention to his preaching as your personal concern. This is an essential condition of his success. It will make the union consummated to-day a vital and spiritual one, on which the blessing of God will rest. It will be the channel of his holiest influence to your souls, cherishing their growth in the knowledge of truth and in the righteousness of Christ.

And you will be constantly in your place in the Christian assembly, listening with heartfelt interest and receiving from him the engrafted word which is able to save your souls. You will not discourage his heart and paralyze his efforts by needless absence, — even in the afternoon, — as the manner of some is. You will gladly make some sacrifice of your ease, and brave the heat and cold and driving storms, so that nothing on your part may be wanting to accomplish the purposes of this ministry.

And you will always question yourselves seriously as to the objects for which you come. If it be from poor and trivial motives, poor and trivial will be the results. If you see nothing in this union but an official and formal connection between a functionary and a corporation, instituted in conformity with venerable custom, — if you come here with no high aims, — with no sense of sin or spiritual want, — with no desire to grow in divine knowledge and grace, — if you feel no need of vital religion as your personal concern, — then you will find here no ministration of life and peace to your souls. You have the form of Godliness but not the power thereof.

Cherish your minister, then, in your hearts, and “esteem him very highly in love for his works’ sake.” Encourage him; assist him; co-operate with him in his labors. Let him count always upon your hearty sympathy in all that

most deeply interests him. Regard him as a friend whom you may trust, as a teacher from whom you may learn, as a guide whom you may safely follow, as he follows Christ. Prove yourselves, in your connection with him, what you profess to be, a society of Liberal Christians. Let him see that in all things you respect his liberty of thought, his liberty of speech and his liberty of action. Hear him candidly, even when he utters opinions which you cannot adopt, or speaks upon subjects which may be distasteful to you. Encourage him to give free utterance to the truth as he believes it, — as he feels it, — and as he loves it. Let him find you always here, and always ready to go with him in his deepest, highest, holiest thoughts, — always ready to work with him in the Gospel of humanity and righteousness. Then will the living congregation make him a living preacher, and his labors and his life will be to you a continual ministration of liberty, holiness and love.

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## APPENDIX.

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AT a meeting of the First Congregational Society in Somerville, held in the Church, on the afternoon of Sunday, February 22d, 1846, it was unanimously

“*Voted*, That the thanks of the Society be presented to Rev. MR. FURNESS of Philadelphia, for his very able, eloquent, and highly interesting Installation Sermon, and that a copy be requested for publication.

“*Voted*, That the thanks of the Society be presented to all the other Reverend gentlemen, who kindly took part in the interesting services of the occasion, and that they be requested to furnish copies of their respective services for the press.

“*Voted*, That Rev. Mr. Sargent be requested to communicate the above votes, and if the request be complied with, as we earnestly hope it may, that he also be requested to have the several services of the Installation, together with the Society’s Letter of invitation to him, and his answer thereto, published in a pamphlet form.”

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### LETTER OF INVITATION TO MR. SARGENT.

DEAR SIR :

At a meeting of the MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN SOMERVILLE, held in the Vestry of the Church after divine service on Sunday, December 28, 1845, in the afternoon, pursuant to a warrant of the Standing Committee duly calling said meeting, it was voted, unanimously, that the Rev. JOHN T. SARGENT be invited to become the Pastor of this Church and Society. We are, Dear Sir, very happy in conveying this harmonious and united action of the Society to you, and are, with sentiments of the highest consideration,

Yours in the bonds of Christian Friendship.

|                   |                                                 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| COLUMBUS TYLER,   | } <i>Standing Committee<br/>of the Society.</i> |
| OLIVER TUFTS,     |                                                 |
| JOHN S. EDGERLY,  |                                                 |
| ROBERT VINAL,     |                                                 |
| JAMES HILL, Jr.   |                                                 |
| THOMAS J. LELAND, |                                                 |
| ORR N. TOWNE,     |                                                 |

## MR. SARGENT'S ANSWER.

*Boston, January 7th, 1846.*

TO THE "FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN SOMERVILLE."

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS AND BRETHREN :

I have received through your Committee, an invitation to become your Pastor, accompanied with the assurance that your vote was entirely unanimous.

In signifying to you, as I now do, my acceptance of your invitation, it is not without the foresight of arduous labors among you. Your Society is a new one : — and, though I am not without some little experience in the ministry, I none the less need your co-operation and sympathy in consideration of the circumstances under which I shall come to you. — No other settled pastor has gone before me into all the parochial service of this vineyard, to prepare my way or to make it easy. The field of labor into which you invite me is but just opening to the hands of the husbandman. Scarcely yet has the field become "white for the harvest," nor, as yet, have the branches of the wished-for vine come up in full luxuriance, over your hill side and tabernacle. But we will live together and labor together in hope ; and I shall come to you with many prayers for the blessing of God on our joint efforts, and with much confidence of your faithful sympathy and assistance.

I will take the unanimity expressed by your vote of invitation as the earnest of your future endeavors to keep the same "unity of spirit" in all your religious action with me, — as the pledge of your undivided confidence, — the promise of that encouragement I am to hope for, in my labors, from your willing hearts and helping hands. To the patient and faithful pastor amid his toils and trials, there is no reward or encouragement so precious as the hearty good will and candor of his people. I feel assured you will give me these when I say, that for the sake of these, I have sacrificed some other considerations of ease elsewhere, and have, in your behalf, declined the invitation of other societies which offered me, in a worldly point of view, perhaps, greater inducements than you have it yet in your power to present. — There is work to be done among you, and by the blessing of God, I will help you to do it. But remember, Christian friends, that in all that concerns the real and vital interests of your Society and your growth in holiness, much more depends upon yourselves than upon your pastor.

Let me but come freely to your hearts and homes in all the candor of unreserved spiritual intercourse ; — let me hope for the counsel of the elders among you and the sustaining influence of all the younger brethren of the flock ; — let my efforts for your good be met by corresponding Christian efforts on my own part, and I fear not for the result, but shall enter cheerfully on my labors, though, beneath their burden I should faint or fall prematurely.

That the "Searcher of hearts," who seeth the end from the beginning, may abundantly bless the connection we are about to form, and guide to prosperous issues our mutual efforts for the good of your Zion, is the prayer of your friend and brother, in the faith of Christ, and in the bonds of the Gospel.

JOHN T. SARGENT.

TO COLUMBUS TYLER, OLIVER TUFTS, JOHN S. EDGERLY, ROBERT VINAL, JAMES HILL, Jr., THOMAS J. LELAND, and ORR N. TOWNE, *Standing Committee of the Society.*



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by  
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## PREFACE

### TO THE DISCOURSE.

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I HAVE gladly availed myself of the opportunity afforded by the interval between the preaching and the publication of this Discourse, to give it a careful revision. In passing beyond the limited and transient means of publication afforded by the pulpit, and giving my thoughts to a larger audience and in a more permanent form, through the press, I have considered it my duty to review, as thoroughly as the time would allow, every position and argument, and to spare no pains to make them more clear. I cannot change any of the opinions originally set forth in the discourse. They are the growth of many years, and all the reflection I have been able to bestow on them since their delivery has confirmed me in them more and more. But I feel it to be incumbent upon me, for the truth's sake, to do what I can, consistently with the original structure of the discourse, to make those opinions plainer, to guard them from misapprehension, and to commend them to the consideration of my Christian brethren. I have reason to think, that, on some points, I failed to convey my full meaning to my hearers, and I am bound to suppose that the failure arose from some looseness or infelicity of statement on my part. I have therefore changed single expressions, wherever by so doing I could make my meaning plainer ; two or three passages that seemed superfluous or digressive have been struck out ; in as many others the thought has been expanded, so as to present

more clearly the positions taken ; and in one instance, I have recast the argument, in order to make its bearing more obvious, and its conclusion more tenable. Believing the doctrines of the discourse to be sound and true, I owed it to the truth to make such alterations in their behalf ; and I also owe it to those who heard the discourse to state distinctly the fact of my making them.

It is better that such public occasions as that for which this discourse was prepared should be generally used for setting forth the internal and vital truths of religion itself, rather than for discussing questions relating to its external, secondary, and merely ecclesiastical affairs. But all subjects of practical interest to Christians, whatever their relative importance, should, in their turn, and in their due proportion, be brought up for consideration. The question which is here opened, it seems to me, is becoming, and must become, a question of some moment among Unitarians, — as it has already become, in one shape or another, in other denominations, according to their several ecclesiastical positions ; but with the affairs of other denominations we would not intermeddle, except to wish them prosperity and peace.

For ourselves, I believe it is widely felt among us that we must become either more decidedly a denomination, or less, — with ecclesiastical lines and tests more definite, or less so. Which course shall we take ? This is a question that cannot be long deferred ; and it seemed to me that any one who should publicly open the question, and declare an individual opinion upon it, — open the way for the discussion and settlement of it, — would be doing good service to the cause of pure religion and true Christian fellowship amongst us. There are other subjects of a far higher spiritual interest ; but this is not one to be wholly passed by, and I trust that none will regret that it has been broached. I gladly relinquish the question to the disposal of others, either to be settled on its merits, or to be put aside as unimportant or untimely.

In taking the ground, that it befits us to become less denom-

inational and ecclesiastical in our views and operations, rather than more so, I seem to myself to be maintaining that conservative position which every thing in the aspect and tendencies of the times compels me to regard as the true position of professional duty and public usefulness in our day. For me to take part with disorganizers, in the present state of social and religious affairs, would belie my whole nature, every conviction of my understanding, and every dictate of my conscience. But a true conservatism is not blind nor indiscriminating. I have no sympathy with that sort of conservatism which would withhold a lifeless body from the grave, merely because it has been so long in the dwellings of men ; none with that which clutches a husk with desperate tenacity, after the tooth of time has eaten out the kernel, and itself become irritating chaff, inclosing nothing and nourishing nobody, — it belongs then to the winds.

It is always a fit question for the conservative to ask himself, What things are to be conserved ? Not every thing, surely, good and bad, useful and useless alike, for ever, under all circumstances, and through all incompatibilities. What is there, it may be asked, in the position, character, and institutions of Unitarian Christians, — the indefinite body of men and churches called by that name, — that should be conserved ? I answer, as a conservative, that the *external* things to be conserved by them are their consistency, their principles of free inquiry, and the strength, independence, and harmony of their churches. These are their great things, — fundamental as regards their external condition, — and are the things to be conserved. And if there are any small things which hinder more than they help these, they are not to be conserved, but they are to be put away, and that in the name of conservatism itself.

If my remarks on our denominational interests generally, and on ecclesiastical councils and representative associations of ministers in particular, shall seem to any to savor of radicalism, I beg them to pause and consider if the charge of radi-

calism does not justly rest elsewhere than on me. Time was when the Westminster Confession, or its equivalent, was the recognized standard of faith in the Congregational churches of New England. That was a real bond, definite and visible. It gave to those churches a visible ecclesiastical unity ; and the ecclesiastical usages incident to such a relation were then suitable, and had a use. But our venerated fathers and predecessors put away that Calvinistic standard, and we bless them for it ; they set up none in its place, and we bless them for that. They thus put away all that constituted a visible ecclesiastical unity among the churches. They did great things, but they did not quite complete their work. They left us a little to do, and but a little. They destroyed the substance of the old ecclesiastical system, and left it to us to remove, at our leisure, its mere accompaniments, whenever we should come to feel the annoyance or unfitness of retaining, under one set of circumstances, things which belonged to another and very different set. They laid the axe at the root of the old ecclesiastical tree ; they cut it down and removed the trunk ; — I only suggest the removal of a few dissevered and perishing branches, that still remain to cumber the ground and choke the new and better growth.

The word *ecclesiastical* occurs very frequently in this discourse. I hope it will be understood by all my readers as referring to those ties and usages which unite a large number of churches into a denomination, or general church, — and not as referring to any matters pertaining to the organization of separate churches, or any of the rules or customs by which they manage their own separate affairs, for their own edification and for the defence and extension of the gospel.

ROXBURY, March 20, 1846.



## DISCOURSE.

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WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT? — Isaiah xxi. 11.

It is with great misgivings that I attempt to answer this question with reference to our own times and our own religious affairs. It is an adventurous thing for any man to cast a horoscope with regard to any extended and complex aspect of human affairs. Whoso undertakes it should do it with modesty and humble deference, remembering that there are others all around as free as he, and wiser than he, it may be, who, from their different position, will read the past differently, and see the present differently, and cherish different expectations and offer different counsels for the future.

It seems to me not inappropriate to an occasion like the present, to attempt a survey — limited and superficial it must needs be, in a single discourse — of the position, duties, and interests of the Christian denomination to which we who are interested in this day's transactions are considered as belonging.

Our denomination, — I know not by what name to call it. It is usually called Unitarian, and I would not be nice in my scruples as to wearing any name, not in itself odious, which any circumstances have brought into vogue. That is a name, however, which refers to a single doctrine, and one that has become less and less a subject of controversial interest; a doctrine, too, which all other denominations profess to hold, and which some do clearly hold, as positively as we do. Besides, there are some persons who are substantially with us, who yet abhor and repudiate the name Unitarian, and their feelings are to be respected. The name will probably continue to be used for a long time. For one, I would say, that it is a name which I never assume and do not covet, yet am not disturbed by. Let any assume it who will. Let any put it upon *me* who will. It shall be no cause of quarrel.

We are sometimes called Liberal Christians. How far we deserve the title, I will not now inquire. But whether we deserve it or not, there is a tone of arrogance about it, and there are objections to any name which none but ourselves are willing to apply to us. We have a right to the name Congregationalists, but that name does not distinguish us from some who are unwilling to be identified with us, and therefore cannot be used as distinctive.

So, then, there is no denominational name which is at once acceptable to all of ourselves, and to the rest of the Christian public when speaking of us. I rejoice that it is so. It shows that we have been so

far true to our theory of free thought and free action, and have consequently so much diversity of thought and action among us, that there is no one term that can clearly define our Christian position, or convey a just idea of what we think and are. It is to be hoped that such a name will never be possible for us, that it will become more and more impossible, until that millennial day when we and other disciples around us shall have all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and then there will be no fit name but Christian, and that in a higher sense than has hitherto belonged to the title.

I said, "our denomination." Is that a proper expression? Are we a denomination? We are such in some sense, but not so definitely such as most other bodies of Christians. There is no other Christian body of which it is so impossible to say where it begins or where it ends. Something like a centre may perhaps be found, but where is the circumference? It is undefined and wavy. We have no recognized principle by which any man, who claims to be a Christian disciple, and desires to be numbered with us, whatever he believes or denies, can be excluded. We have no definite boundaries, defined by ourselves, put on record, and seen of all men, — none except such as have been incidentally furnished us by other denominations, for their own purposes drawing their own boundaries, separately, on one side and the other, giving us thus a sort of virtual boundary, but a jag-

ged one and full of gaps. We resemble somewhat a certain district of territory in this Commonwealth, which was never incorporated as a town, has no corporate existence, and never had boundaries assigned to it by any act of the legislature or of itself. But other towns were incorporated around it, and so boundary lines after a sort were made for it. That district is what they left. It is not a definite corporation. It is an anomaly in the prevailing system ; but its pastures are rich and its fields fruitful notwithstanding, and its inhabitants as free, intelligent, and virtuous citizens as their neighbours.

No, we are not a denomination, in the common and full meaning of that term. And yet we come nearer to being one, have more of the form and semblance of one, than is consistent with our position and our principles. I think we ought not to be a denomination at all. We have not those things which are necessary to the existence of a defined and bounded denomination. We have no marks by which to designate those who belong to us, and no standards by which to test the fitness of their coming among us or remaining among us, or the fitness of their leaving us. We have no recognized creed by which to determine any man's qualification or disqualification for belonging to our ranks, as a denomination.

Are we told that we have such a test and standard in the Bible, — that the Bible is our standard? All other denominations say just the same thing. All claim that as their standard. That does not, then, make us a distinct denomination. Upon that ground,



all other denominations, and all stray, undenominated individuals, might become merged in ours, without giving up any of their peculiarities. So that on that ground we are not a denomination, whatever else we may be. Do you say, the Bible *only* is our standard, and therein we are distinguished and marked off as a denomination? That is a plausible idea, and it has answered pretty well in quiet times; but it is unsound, and does not answer in all emergencies. There is no such thing as the Bible *only*, either for us or other Christians. We, like all others, must take with the Bible some means or principles of interpreting it, ascertaining its purport and requirements. One man says, I take the Bible as the standard, and I take the traditions of the Fathers, or the existing authorities of the Church, as my means of finding out its meaning. Another says, I take the Bible, too, and I take the Westminster Confession, as in my judgment correctly condensing and explicitly stating its doctrines, — my means of interpreting it. Suppose they claimed to be of us. We might receive them gladly, and all who think with them; but then we should not be a distinct denomination, but confounded with all others.

Shall we say that we mean the Bible, as interpreted by fair rules of criticism, — our own, and not those of the Westminster divines or a Romish hierarchy? But what are fair rules of criticism? Are they rules based on the idea, that the Scriptures were composed under the express guidance of inspiration, attending the writers throughout, as some of us maintain? or on the

idea, that there is no such inspiration, and that the Bible is to be dealt with as freely as any other ancient books, as others hold?—for it makes a vast difference on which idea we base our rules of criticism. Or, again, on what system of philosophy shall the criticism and interpretation of the Bible proceed?—that system which makes miraculous attestations necessary to the confirmation of Christ's authority as divine, miracles a chief and essential voucher for the truth of what he taught? or that system which finds the only and sufficient witness and verification of religious truth in the judgments and responses of the individual soul? Or, again, if we choose to be vague, and to say that common sense shall be the interpreter of the Bible, then whose common sense shall it be?—mine, which receives historical facts upon historical testimony and logical grounds? or another man's, who alleges that no kind or amount of testimony can overcome the antecedent improbability of facts which involve the supernatural? Both these kinds of philosophy and of common sense, and all kinds between them, are found among those who profess to base their religion upon the Bible, and to find in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ the best and a sufficient guide of faith and practice. We all, like other men, unite with the Bible one means or principle of interpretation or another, one kind of philosophy or common sense or another. And hence there are almost as great differences among ourselves, or those who are numbered with us, as between us and other denominations. That, therefore, which we have

usually held forth as our denominational test, — “the Bible only,” — is not sufficiently definite or distinctive to serve as a real test.

We have not, then, any defined and authorized tests, by complying with which a man belongs to our denomination rather than some other, or by departing from which he can properly be excluded from it. We have not the essential requisites of a denominational existence. I am glad it is so; but whether we are glad or sorry, so it is.

The time has fully come, — I believe this is the thought of many minds among us, — when it is incumbent on the Unitarian denomination, so called, either to draw some boundary lines for itself, and agree upon some sort of standard, and so become really and intelligibly a denomination or a sect; or else to remove, as soon and as entirely as we may, what little show there still is of boundaries and standards, and cease absolutely to be or appear to be a denomination at all. The former course is, on several accounts, impracticable. We could not agree upon any one standard. We need but imagine the attempt to be made. It is against our nature. It would belie all our former ideas and professions. There would be an inconsistency in it that few could endure. Few of us would enter into a sect so formed. The other course seems to me more practicable, and very desirable; that is, to put out of our minds those ideas, and put out of existence those forms and usages, which give us the semblance of being a denomination, and subject us to many of the evils of being one,

many troubles, and inconsistencies, and jars. I refer to those ecclesiastical forms and usages which give a show of ecclesiastical unity, some formal and official connection between different and separate churches or congregations. I may mention the custom of forming councils for ordaining or installing ministers, and sometimes for other purposes, — councils made up of representatives of a number of churches, and speaking and acting officially in their name. Such councils being frequently formed, and, though varying in their individual members, yet usually having some of the same, come to constitute a sort of visible bond, embracing the greater part of our churches, leaguering them together ecclesiastically. I trust I am not alone in the opinion, that the time has come when this system of councils might advantageously pass into disuse. It can hardly be claimed that they accomplish any good or prevent any evil. When has a council ever in our day restored harmony and peace between a minister and his people, or between one portion of a congregation and another, when disaffection has existed? When or where, in our time, has an ordaining council ever been the means of protecting a parish against the induction of an unworthy or unsuitable minister? When has such a council ever ventured to depart from a mere formal and meaningless routine, and to claim and exercise some real ecclesiastical authority, without getting into inextricable confusion of opinion, and ending in doing nothing beyond the empty formalities of business? There have been cases, in which the moral unfitness of the



candidate has been known to members of the ordaining council, and yet the ordination has proceeded without objection; so strange and unpleasant, and probably ineffectual, would it have been to interfere and advise the parish to retrace their steps. The usual ordination services are appropriate and useful, and need not be omitted where they are desired; for individual ministers, acquainting themselves with the candidate, and being personally satisfied as to his fitness for the ministry, may perform those services, for aught that appears, as well without organizing themselves into council as with, — not as representing certain churches, but as individuals, alone responsible for their own acts. It has always been well understood that it is the act, not of the council, but of the parish, that constitutes the validity of the pastoral relation. A council, therefore, answers no important end. When it does nothing, its business proceedings have too much the aspect of needless formality; and when any of its members propose that something be really done, discord and defeat are the usual results. If councils should become infrequent among us, and finally cease to be called, I cannot see how we should lose any definable good. We should be rid of one source and scene of unprofitable altercation; and, what is more important, should be rid of one of the things that help to keep us in a false position ecclesiastically, and to make us so far a sect in outward show as to involve us in some inconsistency, and a sect in reality just far enough to produce some of the internal mis-

understanding and disaffection incident to a sect, and none of the benefits.

I may notice, in the same connection, ministerial associations ; — I mean those which are composed of the pastors of certain churches as such, in their official capacity, — they and their successors for ever. Such an association becomes, in the eye of the public, the organ and representative body of those churches, expresses their unity, and is regarded as the index of those views on religious subjects in which those churches are presumed to agree. With our principles of free inquiry, there must arise in such an association great differences of views, perhaps differences that are vital in the minds of some. Different members may find themselves at opposite points of the compass on subjects deemed very important. Now, if they were merely so many individual ministers, meeting together informally, as other people meet, in mutual respect and toleration, to discuss those matters, to get one another's light, to encourage one another in their professional studies and duties, and strengthen their personal friendships, it would be harmless, nay, a beautiful and excellent thing. But, being associated in an official and representative character, they naturally feel that they and their churches are, in some manner, held responsible by the public for one another's opinions. Being an ecclesiastical unit, they are considered by the public as agreeing substantially in opinion, or as deeming those matters unimportant on which they differ. Hence, a false position, and frequent embar-

rassment,—and that without remedy; for there is nothing in the avowed principles of their association that should prevent their arriving at such contradictory opinions,—no standard, and can be none, by which to try any one, no ground on which any member can be excluded without gross inconsistency, and no ground on which any member ought to feel obliged to withdraw himself, as long as he remains the accepted pastor of a church belonging to that ecclesiastical circle. Such a position is unfavorable to good fellowship; and it is unfavorable to the cause of truth. For perhaps some members, dreading the scandal of a controversy among the members of the same ecclesiastical family, will forbear to make known their individual convictions, or to controvert what they regard as the false and pernicious opinions of others, when, as free and honest men, they ought to do it. Or, in their eagerness to disavow a responsibility for one another's opinions, which they know that the public, however mistakingly, will charge upon them, perhaps they assail the obnoxious views, or defend their own opposite ones, with a forwardness, a warmth, a bitterness, more than enough. Hence, perhaps, personal alienations, bad temper, and social disruptions, arising from the alleged or constructive ecclesiastical unity. It is impossible for men who stand together in a false position to do just right by one another, or by the truth. The only way is to correct that position. It would seem that all the benefits of such associations might be secured and fully enjoyed, if their representative character were removed, and they were

made really and visibly unofficial, with no reference to the churches with which the members may be connected.

The American Unitarian Association, so called, is not liable to the same objection, inasmuch as there is nothing in its constitution that would prevent any Christian from joining it, whatever his theological opinions; and inasmuch as its members do not come into it as representatives of churches, but as individuals, ministers, and laymen, from far and near, from various churches and from no churches, as the case may be. It has, according to its articles, no ecclesiastical or denominational character. There is something not quite right in theory, perhaps, in having a series of publications, selected by a committee, and purporting to speak, understood to speak, in the name and in behalf of a whole community of Christians, among whom there is great diversity of opinion on many subjects. I am not aware that any practical evils have yet arisen as to the Tracts; and if evils shall appear hereafter, some change can easily be made. Religious publications, by whomsoever circulated, should be, as really and as manifestly as possible, the works and exponents of individual minds.\*

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\* I have no wish to see the American Unitarian Association dissolved. A better name might, perhaps, be given to it; but that is a secondary matter. I certainly would not wish it dissolved, nor any of its activity remitted, until the wisdom of many shall have devised and approved some better means for diffusing liberal principles, and for aiding and encouraging any feeble churches with which its members may have sympathy. The excellent zeal for freedom, truth, and holiness, which now finds scope for



Our semi-annual Conventions—in their present character of mere social gatherings, discussing all subjects freely, all the members coming in and going out uncommitted, not voting by majorities that this or that matter of opinion is settled thus or so—are productive of many benefits and satisfactions, as we know, and of no apparent evils.\* If they shall come to assume a representative and ecclesiastical character, they will help to fix us in a false position, — to make us a denomination in form, when we cannot be one in reality.

Besides the system of ecclesiastical councils and representative associations, which bind us by subtleties in a sort of denominational alliance, just sufficient to produce some inconsistency and embarrassment, without giving us the coherency and strength of a genuine and well compacted sect, which we never were, and which it is growing more and more impossible for us to be, — besides these, there still lingers among us, at the bottom of those things, and of much

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its exercise in the doings of that Association, should not be diverted from that channel of influence, until it find a broader and better one. No better one has yet been suggested. It is enough that the character and action of the Association (it is so constituted) will be modified at any future period by the views held by our people, at the time, respecting their true position and interests as Christians and among Christians.

\* At the Convention in New York last autumn, there were present members of at least three different denominations, all taking part in the deliberations, none of them compromising their peculiar opinions, but sitting and conferring together in unbroken harmony, and with mutual respect and edification. That Convention could not be called a sectarian body. We came away from it wiser, better, happier, and no whit more sectarian in feeling or purpose.

else, a remnant of the old ecclesiastical feeling belonging to other times and a different state of things.

There is a vague feeling that individual ministers cannot stand alone ; that they must have an official relation to one another, must be banded together in some sort of recognized league, and constitute a clerical body politic, in order to sustain one another, to present a goodly front to the world, and keep up the respectability and influence of their office. It is enough to say of this feeling, that it is only a feeling, a faint shadow from old and obsolete realities. I think it would be difficult to show how any minister among us obtains any official strength or consequence, except what he may derive from the confidence and appreciation of his own parish, together with such influence with the public at large as his personal talents, and character, and strength of position at home, may give him. His social intercourse with men of the same profession is very important to him, and the more of such intercourse the better ; but that intercourse does not require the formation of public official relations, but is rather hindered and cramped by them.

There is a feeling, too, that our separate churches cannot be merely so many separate churches, independent, each doing its own business, and its members associating with the members of other churches for social, religious, or benevolent purposes, according to affinities or circumstances ; but that there must be some sort of bond, however trivial, and hardly felt or noticed by the churches themselves,—some bond, formal or implied, that shall combine them in a nominal unity,

a kind of general church, which amounts to a sect, — a feeble imitation of what is found on a large scale in the church of Rome. The Protestant churches have never been sufficiently weaned from their old mother of Rome, nor have we been. Among other errors from that source which are still extant is this idea, that there must be, in order to a proper unity, a general church, composed of many separate churches. I know not what good ground there is for that idea. I know of no legitimate idea of a church but these two: first, any local association of believers organized as any one of our churches is, for the purpose of promoting religious objects among themselves and around them; and second, that ideal, invisible church, which embraces all true followers of Christ, wherever scattered through space or time, — an undefined church, universal, catholic. All attempts to realize an idea of a church between these two have failed as to the object proposed, namely, a real unity, and have been a fruitful source of sectarian discord, uncharitableness, and oppression. It has always been so in the church of Rome, notwithstanding its alleged unity. It has been so more or less in all Protestant denominations, our own inclusive. This idea still lingers among us to our harm.

Closely related to the ecclesiastical idea just considered is this other, — the idea, that we ought to be able to determine who is to be regarded as a Christian believer, and who is not, — that there must be some test, by appealing to which we may pronounce that

this or that person is to be recognized as a Christian, or that he is not,—and that it is quite essential to the interests of Christianity in the world, that we should come at such a test and apply it, and decide in any given case whether a man or a class of men is entitled to the Christian name or not.

Many of our members doubtless think it desirable and important that we should come to some general agreement as to such test, by which we may limit in some uniform and accredited manner, as liberal as may be, yet as definite as may be, the application of the term Christian, so that we may not include or recognize as belonging to our denomination any persons who, by such a test, are excluded from the category of Christian believers. And certainly a Christian denomination ought not to recognize infidels as belonging to it, if it can find a test by which they may be justly declared to be infidels. If we are in future to take a more rather than a less denominational character, it would seem to be necessary for us to draw some lines by which we may guard ourselves from an ecclesiastical union with infidels. The ecclesiastical feeling, of course, moves us to seek such a test, impresses upon us the necessity of it. No measure towards establishing such a test has yet been broached among us, but the general subject has been discussed among us, producing some conflict and perplexity of opinion. Before we think of adopting any test of that kind, and before we put ourselves into a position which will make it necessary, we ought to consider well how difficult it must be to find any (even if we could agree) which



would be at once just to others, and consistent with our own liberal principles in its application. Tests which have been hitherto tried among other Christians have not worked well, and those which have been suggested among ourselves are not free from objections. We may notice some of them.

The High Churchman says, Assent to the decisions of the Episcopal authorities, the Church, and conform to its ritual, and we pronounce you a Christian, and cannot otherwise. Of course, one half of the professed followers of Christ are by this test nominally excluded from the fold of Christ.

The Presbyterians have drawn up a series of doctrinal articles which they believe are taught in the Scriptures, and those who will assent thereto, for substance, are the only Christians they can recognize. This test bears hard upon those who cannot find those doctrines in the Scriptures.

To come nearer home, some will state the matter thus: If you admit Christianity as a religion supernaturally proved, if you hold that the divinity of Christ's mission and teachings is authenticated by the miraculous acts performed in attestation of it, then we call you a Christian; otherwise, not. But there are men in all lands, and I presume in all sects, who reply, that the argument from miracles is not the ground of *their* faith in Christ, does not add any strength to *their* convictions that he was a divine messenger, and yet they believe that he was such, and honor and love him and trust in him with all their hearts, — believe Christianity on other grounds. It is a hard sentence which

pronounces that they must not be called Christians, when they *are* Christians by earnest profession, and perhaps by many signs recognized by all minds.

Some would be disposed to say, Lay your hand upon the Bible and profess that you believe all that is declared as truth and fact in that volume, and you are a Christian believer; otherwise, not. But then, inasmuch as almost all Christians, both among ourselves and other denominations, do make *some* discriminations between one book of the Bible and another, or between one passage and another, the test becomes of too vague a character to be conveniently applied either by ourselves or others. The case of those persons who, on philosophical grounds, arbitrarily deny the whole class of facts which involve a supernatural agency will be considered a little farther on.

Other persons maintain that character is the only legitimate test by which to bestow or withhold the Christian name. If a man has the Christian character, they say, and leads a Christian life, and manifests a Christian spirit, we pronounce him a Christian; if not, we pronounce him no Christian. This is the most impracticable, unwarrantable, and mischievous test of all, — considered as an *ecclesiastical* test, to be openly applied. It is the one of all others that we cannot apply wisely, and have no right to apply. As a test to be adopted by a denomination, and therefore to be publicly applied, it involves a moral adjudication which we have no right to exercise with regard to our fellow-men. It implies a power to scrutinize motives, and read the heart, which we do not possess, and which

it is often criminal to assume. It is unjust to others, and depraving in its influence on our own souls, to exercise it. Hardly any man is so bad, as not to have some Christian traits in some degree ; and none is so good, as to possess them all, or any of them in perfection. Where shall we draw the visible line, dividing the sheep from the goats ? and who authorized us to draw it anywhere ? and what interests of truth or humanity require that it should be drawn anywhere ? An individual Christian will, of course, have in his mind his own ideal of the truly and thoroughly Christian character, and in the privacy of his own thoughts he will measure by that standard the moral and spiritual attainments and deficiencies of one and another among those with whom he is acquainted. He will determine that this or that trait, action, or course of life is Christian or unchristian. And character (taking that term in its broadest sense) we all believe is the standard by which the one holy and omniscient Being judges his accountable creatures. But this standard cannot be set up as the one whereby to give or withhold the Christian name in such a definite way as to determine public, visible, ecclesiastical relations. We speak loosely, when we talk of an extended public relation as a thing to depend on a test so variable, so much a matter of degrees, a matter of so much delicacy, and so wholly out of the reach of our public cognizance, as personal character.

It will be admitted that it would be inconsistent with our principles to exclude from our denomination, if we are to be one strictly, any man or set of men

desiring to belong to it, on any other ground than this, — that they virtually reject the essentials of Christianity, and are to be regarded and declared as not being Christians, not entitled to the name. I think it is our theory, that any one desiring to be of us may be so, and may come into all ecclesiastical relations with us, unless we are obliged to deny him to be a Christian believer. This is the theory ; and it exposes us to difficulty on two sides ; — first, in regard to those who add to the gospel so much extraneous matter, as, in our opinion, to smother and neutralize the Christian truth which they admit ; — secondly, those who subtract so much from the history, authority, and instructions of Jesus Christ, as, in our opinion, not to leave enough to constitute any consistent and well grounded Christianity at all.

On the one side, many would say of the Roman Catholics, and some would say of genuine old-school Calvinists, that the former encumber Christianity with many fantastic rites, much that is Jewish in form and heathenish in origin, many things foreign to the nature and spirit of Christ's simple and spiritual religion ; and that the latter connect with Christianity a series of metaphysical doctrines, which is not only not a part of it, but is so much at variance with it, that, in being made prominent, it presents the gospel under a false and foreign aspect ; so that the system, with all its superadditions to the truth, does not, on the whole, exhibit Christianity, cannot be taken as a tolerable statement of Christ's religion, — is not Christianity. What shall we say of persons holding these systems



of faith? We cannot for a moment think of denying them the Christian name. They cling to Christ firmly in reverent love. They rest their hopes of salvation upon him. Whole hosts of them, from among the living and the dead, rise up to mind, shining bright with all the lustre of Christian righteousness, purity, and love, and themselves referring all that they are, and all that they hope for, to Christ. Our tongues would be palsied in the effort to pronounce them personally to be no Christian believers. We call them Christians, as they claim to be, — Christians, in spite of the alleged errors of their systems. Now, if any persons, ministers, or churches, holding those systems, wished to join our denomination, and so become identified with us, what should we do? According to our theory, we should receive them, inasmuch as we do not deny them to be Christians. But, by receiving them, and holding such ecclesiastical relations with them as to signify that they belong to our denomination as fully as any of us do, we should declare to the world that we consider their errors of belief to be unimportant, when, in fact, many of us believe those errors are so many and great, that, being made thus prominent, they overshadow and put out of sight the genuine gospel of Christ. We could not, as true men, receive them as holding and teaching substantially what we hold and teach as Christianity. And yet, according to our theory, we should be bound to receive them, and cordially welcome them, and give them free course and furtherance in spreading their doctrines in our name, as much as we did our other members. What should we do?

What could we do, consistently? I cannot tell. Let those answer who hold that we ought to be thoroughly a denomination. It is true, we have at present no practical difficulties in this direction; but any unsound theory is sure to lead to practical difficulties sooner or later.

On the other side are the Rationalists, — that class of them of whom the German Dr. Strauss is usually considered the father and representative. They subtract from Christianity, they brand as falsehood and fable, a large class of facts, — all the supernatural facts, — recorded as real in the four Gospels. They strike out every alternate link in that chain of New Testament history by which alone we arrive at any knowledge of Christ's actions, character, and instructions. They thus discredit the witnesses and the records through which alone they can pretend to derive any knowledge of Christ or Christianity. It is not apparent to others what ground they have left to themselves for maintaining that Christ did or said any of the things attributed to him in those books, every other page of which, according to them, records a myth or a fiction. What shall we say of such persons? Most of us think — I, for one, certainly think — that they have rejected so much that relates to Christ, his history, claims, and instructions, that they are illogical and intellectually inconsistent in retaining what they do retain of Christianity. But then they do, in fact, however illogically, believe that Christ was a real personage, and that his character and teachings are known and well authenticated,

and that a considerable part of those teachings are divine truth. And if they believe thus, whether on any good grounds or not, and accept Christ as their religious head, in the sense in which they think he desired to be head; and if they profess to feel for Christ such love and reverence as they think he meant to claim; and if they, therefore, desire and claim to bear his name, and as a class manifest the usual degree of sincerity, — what shall we do? Shall we distinctly deny them the Christian name, or not? I think we are not prepared to declare explicitly, that they personally are not Christians, are not to be called Christians, when they think that they are Christians, say that they are by every preference of their hearts, and by every conviction of their minds. It would be hard to demand that men should be good logicians, in order to wear uncontradicted the Christian name. We accord that name to the Roman Catholics, and we should not withhold it even from the benighted church of Abyssinia, though they do add to Christianity such crushing mountains of extraneous matter; and why is not addition as bad for the truth as subtraction? \* And if we do not deny explicitly the

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\* Dr. Dewey (than whom there is no man I oftener agree, and better love to agree, with), in his Address delivered before the Berry Street Conference, in May last, in which we find a strong expression of the opinion, that Rationalists should not be called Christians, says as follows: — “I have heard more than one man say, that he would rather be an infidel than a Calvinist, a strict Calvinist of the old school; and I must confess *that* is my judgment. That is to say, I can better get along with the difficulties of the infidel system, — which, observe, is not atheism, nor universal unbelief, not a rejection of natural religion, but only of a revela-

Christian name to those serious Rationalists who claim it, then, according to our theory, we cannot exclude them from our denomination, if they desire to be connected with it. But then, if we receive them and own them, and enter into all ecclesiastical relations with them (unless we make such a protest as is equivalent to a decided exclusion of them), we sanction their fatal subtractions, and give countenance and currency to opinions which we think undermine Christianity, and must subvert it in more logical minds, although it may not have subverted it in theirs. As honest men, we cannot do this, cannot enter into such ecclesiastical or denominational relations with them as to show that we regard them as one with us on the important points of Christianity. What, then, should we do? How shall we reconcile our denominational theory with our honesty as men, and our fidelity to Christian truth? I know not what answer will be given to this question by those who hold that we ought to be a defined, compact, and homogeneous

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tion, — I say, I can better get along in my own mind with the difficulties of this system, than I can with that of Calvin; embracing the damnation of infants, actual or deserved, and the just exposure from Adam's sin of all men to that doom. I may be wrong, but that is my opinion."

I presume that Dr. Dewey would not put Rationalism below infidelity. I presume he does not deny the Christian name to Calvinists. Can he, then, in perfect consistency, withhold it from the Rationalists, who, in his opinion, come nearer to truth, that is, Christianity, than the Calvinists do? Both profess Christianity alike, both claim the Christian name alike; can he admit the claim of those who are farthest from genuine Christianity, and yet deny the same claim on the part of those who, of the two sets of claimants, come the nearest to genuine Christianity?



denomination, like other denominations. I should answer it by saying that we ought not to be such a denomination, and ought to dispense with those ecclesiastical usages and ties which tend to make us such a denomination either in fact or appearance, — ought to put ourselves in such a position, that we cannot, by any fair inference or construction, be held in the slightest degree responsible for one another, as individuals or as a body; and then, as we should have no occasion to admit or ecclesiastically recognize any man or set of men, so we should have no occasion either to exclude any, or to receive them with grudges and protests more ungracious than exclusion itself. We should be in a position to accord the Christian name, at least so far as to forbear denying it, to any who seriously assume it, and that without being in any way committed to their errors, however great, — free to expose and controvert those errors, whether of addition or subtraction, not undertaking to say how much error of either kind shall in any case take the Christian name from a man who thinks that he has faith in Christ.

Profession, with the reasonable appearance of sincerity, cannot be disregarded in the public and extended relations of this life. It is but Christian courtesy, and a decent respect for the opinions and feelings of others, to concede to them the Christian name, if they claim it and value it, — to concede it, at the very least, by that silent acquiescence which means that we do not feel called upon to decide upon the validity of such a claim. By such concession, whether silent

or explicit, we do not certify that they hold the Christian faith in its purity or entireness, or on its true grounds, or on any sufficient grounds, or separate from errors which go to mask its genuine features or neutralize its value ; nor that they have the spirit of Christ, or walk according to his truth. Let any man take the Christian name who will, and take it on his own responsibility, as we all must. We may not judge the heart, — there is one that judgeth. Whoso takes that name must settle for himself the one solemn and vital question, whether he wears it so rightfully and worthily, that the Master, to whom alone he standeth or falleth, will own him in the last day. The name, by whomsoever conceded, cannot open to us the gate of heaven, nor hide a single sin from the sight of God.

I am driven to the conclusion, that ecclesiastical arrangements, such as I have referred to under a previous head of this discourse, are not wanted for the purpose of restricting the application of the Christian name ; and that our denomination, since its theory requires only that name as a condition of membership, is by those arrangements already involved in, and must always be liable to, embarrassing and inextricable inconsistencies. It would be well to have our denominational theory brought into harmony with our ecclesiastical bonds and customs ; and I see no better means to this end, than to give up as many of the latter as have become nugatory and needless.

I hardly change the topic in passing to the remark, that a good deal of the ecclesiastical feeling which we inherit from Rome, and which still survives to hamper and perplex us, hangs about the term *fellowship*. There is a vague feeling, that there must be a sort of technical church-fellowship among Christians, — that we must keep up some ecclesiastical relations for the sake of that fellowship, — must constitute ourselves a denomination, in order that we may have that fellowship with one another, which is denied us with other denominations. A denominational existence implies some conditions of fellowship. The absence of such conditions, or an indefiniteness about them, brings confusion and anarchy into a denomination; and to establish them and make them definite involves difficulties always great, and, with us, apparently insuperable.

It were almost to be wished that that good word, Fellowship, could be stricken out of our language; for, while it remains, it seems all but impossible to get rid of the false ideas which it perpetuates, or to get out of the false position in which it places us. We cannot, indeed, spare the *thing* fellowship; we would rather create or restore it, if possible. But we can spare those things which have hitherto had the effect to pervert or destroy it, as a bond of love and harmony among the professing disciples of a common Master, whose leading commandment to his disciples was, that they should love one another. Our Lord earnestly enjoined upon his followers that they should be closely united by the tie of a common faith. The apostles

established such arrangements and rules in the churches which they planted, as they deemed, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, most favorable to the strength, unity, and peace of those churches, — the fellowship which their Lord inculcated. In taking a survey of Protestant Christendom, we immediately see that those ecclesiastical bonds and rules which the several denominations have adopted, by which to establish, restrict, and regulate Christian fellowship, have had the effect to divide the members of Christ's body from one another, and to produce sectarian antagonism, — the opposite of that oneness which Christ enjoined. And as to the internal condition of the several sects, the incurable strifes and divisions going on within their respective communions plainly show that their ecclesiastical regulations, which establish a nominal fellowship among their members, are very far from producing a real fellowship, but rather hinder it, and make it impracticable. As a means of producing the oneness among Christians which Christ desired, they are a failure, and that failure is in daily process of a more complete demonstration. It is becoming evident, I think, that the Protestant denominations, in order to promote a true Christian oneness or fellowship, must have either more ecclesiastical bonds and partitions, or fewer, — rules either more stringent, or less so. The effect of having more in number, or more stringent ones, may be learned from the history of the church of Rome, with all the outrages upon human rights and Christian charity which that history brings to view. That way will not be tried again. Mankind will not



bear it again. The opposite way must be tried. And why should it not be tried? Why should not *we* try it, — we who have already gone farther in that direction than most others, and found great advantage in doing so? Why should not we keep on in the right way, as fast and as far as we can, and remove any of those merely ecclesiastical bonds which, while they establish a nominal and formal fellowship, do not produce a real oneness among ourselves or our fellow-Christians, but only plague us with inconsistencies, and, as far as they go, distort and mystify the free and genuine sentiment of Christian friendship, and of universal brotherly kindness?

We want Christian fellowship, — all we have of it, and a thousand times more. Let every real expression of it be retained. But why should any expression of it be technical, official, *ecclesiastically* ordered and limited? I can gladly give the Right Hand of Fellowship to another, a brother entering the ministry, simply in token that I have personal confidence in him as a Christian man and teacher, and that I am glad to meet him at the threshold, and say a friendly word of welcome and encouragement. But why should I do it officially? by what necessity? for what use to the minister, or to the church, or to Christianity? If I should ever have occasion hereafter to perform that part in an ordaining service, I will do it, not ecclesiastically, not in the name of the council or of any definite number of churches, but in my own behalf, and in behalf of all persons or churches, present or absent, of the council or not of it, who may sympa-

thize with me in the act. It would be well that all relations of an official and ecclesiastical kind, subsisting among clergymen, should cease ; and this, not that they may be thrown apart and isolated, but that their relations to one another may be more real and spontaneous, more legitimate and extended, more independent and unencumbered, more cordial, and more Christian.

This false notion of fellowship, which I am opposing, has got itself mixed up with the subject of ministerial exchanges, — the exchange of pulpits, — and so begets misunderstandings. There is a vague notion, for instance, that I am officially in fellowship with those whom I invite into my pulpit ; and that I decline, perhaps explicitly renounce, such fellowship with those whom I do not so invite. This is an unfounded and injurious construction. Exchanges are not an ordinance of God ; they are casual incidents, occurring a few times in a year, for mutual and personal convenience, and, of course, with a very few persons, — various circumstances besides a presumed general agreement on the important points of belief, often accidents, determining with whom they are made. In my own mind, I no more establish a peculiar and technical fellowship with the twenty men, more or less, whom I choose or happen to exchange with, than I exclude from such fellowship the twenty thousand whom I do not happen or choose to exchange with. I recognize no such fellowship or exclusion from fellowship in either case. Let this false notion of ministerial fellowship,

which I am objecting to, be discountenanced and put away, and the misunderstanding will cease.

The term *fellowship*, if it could be divested of the ecclesiastical ideas that have so long darkened and superseded its true meaning, would be a most expressive and comprehensive Christian word. Love is the one Christian law. The whole tendency of Christianity is to draw men together, and bind them together as brethren. Christian men cannot keep apart. Wherever the spirit of Christ comes, there men learn to see eye to eye, mind answereth to mind, and heart to heart. There can be no cold self-seeking, self-sufficing individualism among true Christians. By the influence of Christian love, the sympathies of men meet in hallowed confluence, and unite them in one brotherhood. By Christian communion, the strength of one, the light, the trust, the piety, and peace of one, become the strength, and light, the trust, piety, and peace of many. The Christian religion and human fellowship are two inseparable things, not to be divided. An unsocial religion cannot claim a gospel stamp or origin. I object to the arbitrary, artificial, ecclesiastical fellowship, because, among other mischiefs, it obstructs the genuine Christian fellowship. False relations, accompanied, as they must be, by false separations, necessarily stand in the way of real relations. Merely nominal bonds hinder the growth of those vital and wholesome ones which we desire to have strengthened and extended.

There are many modes of the legitimate Christian fellowship. They run into each other, and can hardly be

defined separately. There is the fellowship which may exist among members of the same church or congregation, that is, just such fellowship as may naturally arise among those who stately worship and commune together. There is a sphere for Christian fellowship among those who are drawn together either from a single church or from among many churches, and are moved to act together in one spirit, to kindle each other's devotion, confirm each other's faith, to provoke one another to good works ; or to devise liberal things for the poor and the ignorant, for the oppressed and forsaken, for the widow and the fatherless, for the erring and the lost ; or to send forth the living messenger, and the written word, that shall impart to others the blessings of that truth which they themselves agree in and rejoice in as the light of their own souls. There is a Christian fellowship that hallows virtuous friendship and love, and in the private relations of life unites according minds by ties more sacred than those of selfish interest and the worldly mind. There is a Christian fellowship which consists in the sentiments of sympathy and brotherly good-will, which it becomes every Christian to feel, and to exercise as he has opportunity, towards all men, whatever their belief, character, or position, simply as his fellow-men, whom it is his duty and his privilege to cheer, gladden, and assist, in whatever way he can. And, finally, there is that wider, higher, spiritual fellowship, which it is the privilege of every Christian to claim, and rejoice in, with all the good in all ages, all who can guide him by their wisdom, inspire him by their example, purify him by



their purity, and lift up his spirit by the elevation of their own. This is a fellowship which all may have, who have the heart to appreciate and desire it. This is a fellowship which is intersected by no denominational lines. It is established by no ecclesiastical ties, and is dissolved by no ecclesiastical ruptures. It is no arbitrary relation. It is a fellowship that passes unimpeded round the world, and is transmitted unbroken through the ages. Its free gifts are spiritual light, and moral power and impulse, kindly guidance and helpfulness, and clear and holy benefactions and enjoyments, which hierarchies cannot intercept, nor sects fence in, which time cannot limit, nor death itself cut off.

The denominational and ecclesiastical feeling which yet lingers among us is associated with the idea, that some sort of ecclesiastical union, formal or implied, is necessary for the maintenance and propagation of Christian truth, — the truth, either as opposed to errors which we may think other sects have incorporated with it, or as opposed to speculations of various kinds, which we may think subversive of the very foundations of Christianity.

As to the first of these points, it is very questionable whether such means are necessary to the desired end, or are likely to promote it, taking the whole field and a long period into view. Any one, looking carefully over the history of our denomination for the last thirty or forty years, will perceive, I think, that we do not owe our strength in any considerable degree to any of

those usages or movements which have tended to give us boundaries as a sect. Judging from the force and numbers of any visibly organized array which we are able to present, we appear to be one of the weakest denominations in New England ; whereas, in point of influence in the direction of social affairs, and in shaping the general course of thought, we are one of the strongest, as is manifest from many signs. We have never been statistically great. Our strength lies in the sympathy which our more free and rational, though somewhat indefinite theology, finds among intelligent and influential men scattered all through the community, many of them having nothing to do with us as a denomination, and liking every thing about us better than our slight sectarian aspect, — attracted to us partly by our comparative freedom from the position and trammels of a sect. The great controversies, which made us, theologically, a permanent, respectable, and influential portion of the Christian family, were carried on at a period when we were less a defined denomination than we have been since, and by men singularly individual in their position, having little or nothing to do with us as a defined denomination. And now if we were to dissolve every denominational bond, and disclaim all ecclesiastical relations except those existing within each separate church, what harm would ensue ? Wherein should we be weakened ? What tongue would be silenced among us thereby ? What page in our religious and theological literature would be blotted, or be left unwritten, on that account ? What pulpit would be closed ? What church scattered or

thinned? What channel of influence would be barred against us, however it might be changed a little in its shape and direction? What tie of Christian sympathy would be broken? What charitable agency, combined or individual, need be stopped? What source of real strength, what means of *Christian* union, would be cut off?

If we had a definite creed, then a denominational existence, with its various ecclesiastical bonds and machineries, would be suitable, and perhaps necessary. But we cannot have such a creed; and if we could, the setting of it up would be such a departure from our principles, as to hurt our self-respect, and subject us to the deserved reproaches of others. It is to be hoped that few among us desire a written and definite creed. There are, indeed, some persons, imperfectly acquainted with us, who, thinking they have an affinity with us, and who, from always living among sects, have not yet risen to a conception of the possibility of being a Christian man, or a Christian church, without wide ecclesiastical relations, definite standards, a denominational union, and an aggressive array,—there are some such who desire to know where we stand, demand to know where to find us. And it is a common complaint among those who dislike and oppose us, that they do not know where to find us. But they cannot be informed where to find *us*.—Us! there is no us in any corporate sense, and it was never meant that there should be; I pray God there never may be. We properly consist of a scattered and indefinite number of free minds and free churches, all forming their

opinions for themselves, and not anxious to make them conform to those of the rest. No man or set of men is competent or authorized to speak for the whole, or for the majority of us. If you wish to know where to find any given individual preacher or writer, you can ascertain; but you will never know where to find *us*. Our strength lies in our freedom and diffusiveness, and we are and shall be weakened just to the degree in which we become compacted into a denominational position, and fettered by ecclesiastical ties and relations.\*

And now as to the other point, — that ecclesiastical union is important, as a means of powerfully discountenancing and checking the incursion and spread of any speculations which, most of us may think, strike a blow at the foundations of Christianity.

No ecclesiastical power or influence has ever been able to stop such speculations, either those which have been designedly or in their tendency hostile to Christianity, or those which have in the end proved favorable to the purification and spread of Christianity. The

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\* The history of sects in past times may not seem to sustain me in the position, that we shall flourish better without a general ecclesiastical union. The Wesleyan Methodists organized, and they are strong and prosperous. The Whitefieldians did not organize, and they are now unknown. The English Unitarians, in the last century, gave up ecclesiastical union, without the success that might have been hoped for. I am not staggered by such facts. We do not know all the circumstances under which those denominations began or carried on their various measures. In making such comparisons, we are likely to leave out some important circumstances that determined the result. We do know our own circumstances, and can take them all into account, and they are such as lead me and many others to maintain the doctrine of this discourse.



latter have gone on in spite of ecclesiastical opposition ; and the former have come to an end, but not by ecclesiastical means. The church of Rome has frequently had to deal with speculations of the latter kind, — those which have resulted well for the cause of the pure gospel, — but, with all her spiritual enginery, and with the secular arm to help her, she could never stop them. She pronounced Huss, and Jerome of Prague, to be enemies of the faith. She could set public opinion against them ; she could launch a terrible excommunication against them ; she could kill them ; but she could not stop them. They went on all the more, and their principles and their influence still remain and go on. She thought Luther an enemy of the faith, but she could not stop him ; she could not even kill him ; and his influence now pervades the civilized world. She liked not the speculations of the Huguenots of France. She could enact St. Bartholomew scenes upon them ; but she could not stop them ; they are going on yet. She sees no friend of Christianity in John Ronge, but she cannot stop him. No hierarchy, and no denomination, has ever been able to stop its speculators, and they have all had occasion to try. The old Congregational order of New England could not stop us. They could cut us off from fellowship with the majority, but they could not stop us. We are still going on.

On the other hand, all those reforming vagaries and philosophical movements which have been really hostile to Christianity, whatever may have been the true or the avowed design of them, — and such have arisen

in every age, — have been stopped, indeed, but not by ecclesiastical action or influence. They have sometimes fallen from their own flimsiness ; or, when they have been strong, like the English Deism of the last century, or the French Atheism that followed it, strong and able to maintain a long and hard struggle, they have yielded at last, not to the stern anathemas or the kindly persuasions of any church establishment as such, but to those wants and sympathies that plead for religion in the heart of the world, and to that power of truth which resides in the crown of no hierarch, nor in the vote of any synod or sect, but which visits, one by one, the free and individual minds of those who seek her earnestly, and love her beauty, and welcome her sway.

Very faint, indefinite, and indirect must be the hindrance which we could or would, by any ecclesiastical action or influence, set against the progress of the speculations which, from time to time, arise among us and around us, with the appearance of a design or a tendency to subvert the gospel. We cannot stop them. And why should we wish to exercise against them any such influence, however gentle and subtile, or even inferential ? We do not wish it, — if we define our own thought to ourselves, we must find ourselves too consistent to wish it. They will stop of themselves, as soon as they ought to stop. Let us have perfect confidence in the truth, and have no fear of leaving it, as far as human agency is concerned, to free, unbacked discussion between man and man. Whatever novel speculations arise, that, according to receiv-

ed ideas and our own best judgments, are subversive of the gospel, — let any man, who is moved thereto, oppose and controvert them, bravely, honestly, heartily, as he loves truth. This is the way to test them fairly. If any of them should prove to have an element of truth in them, it will thus be brought out, made apparent, and secure its rightful place in the general mind ; and if they have no such element, they will not stand the contest long, and the crown of truth will be the brighter for their having arisen and fallen. Such of them, if any, as shall prove in the end to be compatible with a faith in Christianity, as the saving truth, God's own revelation, have a right to exist and go on ; for we may be sure there are minds that will find in them a supply of their spiritual wants, and thus the triumphs of Christianity will be extended. But whatever of such novel opinions, or old opinions reproduced, are actually and inherently incompatible with Christianity as divine, time and free discussion will show them to be so, and then they must pass away. They will have unsettled and misled some individual minds, — that cannot be helped, — but they must perish, and leave no permanent trace of themselves in the world. For of this one thing we may be well assured, — the entire history of all past ages confirms it, — that, whatever opinion, system, or movement is really and essentially, however covertly, or even undesignedly, hostile to the religion of Christ's gospel, it will not hurt the gospel, but must itself fall before it. That gospel is the rock which all the assaults and all the ingenuities of eighteen centuries have not moved a hair's

breadth from its eternal foundations ; and there is nothing in the mental movements of the nineteenth century that threatens a severer trial of its permanence than it has undergone a hundred times before. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken ; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

All we want, in reference to any such speculations, is such a freedom from denominational lines and ecclesiastical entanglements, that no man shall ever by an inference be held responsible for an opinion until he personally adopts it ; that any man may be free to let them alone, if he will, without being subjected, by an inference even, to the charge of connivance ; and free to discuss, disown, and controvert them, without being subjected to the odium of a family quarrel, or the charge of sectarian exclusiveness.

I will not attempt to go over any more ground. I have designed to show that we have no need of being a distinct and bounded denomination,—no need of any ecclesiastical relations or regulations, except such as pertain to our separate churches within themselves ; that such things are incompatible with our principles ; that they do us no good and considerable harm, and had better not be.

I may seem to have attributed too much consequence to those slight denominational bonds, and few unobtrusive ties and usages, which give us a semblance, so faint, of an ecclesiastical unity. I know well that these matters are insignificant, as compared



with the great subjects of truth and righteousness. Yet I cannot regard any thing as of little consequence, that involves any inconsistency, and puts us into false relations with one another or the world, — with any opinion, or institution, or man, or thing. I cannot regard any change as trivial which would have a tendency to put us into right relations, and make us consistent. There is such a dignity, serenity, and power, in holding a perfectly true position, that nothing can be called a small matter which points towards such a position.

I do not like to dwell upon it as a *duty*, to put away, as far as we can, the things which may be found to mark us a denomination, and to give us an ecclesiastical character, — not as a duty, or as the least of two sets of evils; but I would that we could see it to be a great *privilege*, that we are so situated that we can renounce them. We can do it, — we alone, perhaps, of the whole Christian world. Other denominations have their boundary lines ploughed down so deep, that they cannot readily efface them. Their various ecclesiastical relations and usages enter more or less into their very structure, and are identified with their ideas of religion itself; and they cannot throw them off at once, if they would. They must go on for years, some of them centuries it may be, enduring all the jars, collisions, perplexities, and thousandfold hindrance and mischief incident to a denominational existence.\* But we, from the fortunate cir-

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\* “The Abolitionists have broken the national churches of the Baptists and Methodists in twain; the Presbyterians have broken by their own

cumstances of our origin and position, can throw them off. They have no necessary connection with the prosperity or multiplication of our churches, or our progress in the life of faith and godliness. Our ecclesiastical scaffolding is not fastened to our temple; not a timber of it is mortised into the walls; it gives no support at any point to the main structure. We can throw down that scaffolding, and leave our rock-built temple unencumbered by its rubbish, undisturbed by its harsh creakings, and unmarred by its deformity. When it shall have been thrown down effectually,

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weight; and, if we may judge by appearances, the Episcopal church is in some danger of a similar result. The two Presbyterian schools have yet a North and South question on hand; and if the Abolitionists could really contrive to break all these national arrangements into a thousand pieces, in our humble judgment it would be one of the greatest blessings that could befall religion or its professors in the various denominations." This passage is taken from a long article on ecclesiastical arrangements in the *New York Journal of Commerce*, for March 11, a paper understood to be in Orthodox hands.

We all know that other denominations are rent and afflicted by internal differences and distractions, far greater than any that have troubled us, or than we are likely to encounter; because their denominational character is more marked, and their ecclesiastical tests and arrangements are more stringent and complex. Their troubles will not grow lighter or fewer. Every thing in the signs of the times and the character of the present age indicates that those internal troubles must increase, until the severe discipline shall have broken down all sectarian barriers and ecclesiastical assumptions, and Christians shall have arrived at last at that liberty where-with Christ would make them free. Centuries of struggle and discord must probably intervene; but if that great consummation shall come, however dearly it may be bought, it will be worth the cost. Then, it may be, the idea of a really universal church — an idea that has always haunted Christian minds — may become possible to be realized; and a truly catholic church, whose form is not yet dreamed of, may grow up and be established in the world, and be indeed a kingdom of God on earth.

wholly, through the legitimate influence of an elevated, anti-sectarian, and truly catholic feeling prevailing amongst us, we shall occupy a position privileged above all others, — a position that, for opportunity, strength, and beauty, has not been attained or seen since that day of Pentecost when the apostles began their work.

And then, with that high and true position secured, our consistency established, our shackles wholly removed, and every provocative of discord, uncharitableness, and sectarian ambition put away, we shall be free, — each man, in his own place and sphere, unencumbered, — wholly free to do our great and appropriate work, which is, with singleness of eye and aim, to preach and promote the righteousness of Christ, righteousness and faith, piety and love, purity and peace. To renew the soul, to form the character, to meet the most immediate and real wants of the soul, to deal directly with the conscience and the heart, to forward the religion of the life, — this is our legitimate province. Every thing in our principles and our history points to this as our work. All that we believe points to this as the greatest Christian work. We can do this. We should let nothing hinder our doing this. We can do nothing else well but this. We have properly nothing to do with denominational objects or ecclesiastical regulations. We manage them poorly. They do not fit us. They belittle us. And, just to the degree in which we shall hereafter meddle with them, they will disturb our peace, fritter our strength, hamper our arms, distract our speech, divide our

thoughts, and hinder that true fellowship which is indeed the unity of the spirit. May the time soon come, — would that our own eyes might behold it! — when we shall cast aside all external encumbrances, and thenceforth know nothing but our glorious privilege to work with undivided energies within the very vineyard itself of our Lord!



## CHARGE.

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BY REV. N. L. FROTHINGHAM, D. D.

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You request me, Sir, to address to you what is called the Charge, on this occasion. I can see no reason why I should be excused from the service. I feel no right to decline it. I might tell you that our Congregational usage does not insist upon this part of the ceremony, when a minister of the gospel, who has been ordained before, only resumes his labors in a new place. He was exhorted to be faithful to his trust, when he first assumed it; and that might seem enough. But we all need to be reminded daily; and there is certainly no objection to your choosing the manner in which these solemn exercises shall be conducted. I might say, also, that there are some peculiar circumstances connected with our position here, yours and mine, that make it difficult to perform this duty with the perfect honesty and freedom that it demands. But it would be the poorest of apologies for shrinking from any duty, that it was delicate or

hard. I will allude no further, then, to either of these considerations, except to say that they will give shape to the few words that I have now to speak. Since you have already received the general charge to be faithful as a Christian minister, I shall avoid all generalities. They would not seem suitable to this new occasion. And if there are any circumstances that give a special interest to our assembling here to-day, I shall rather speak with direct reference to them, than utter ambiguous language, or resort to timid reservations. Any expressions that may sound over-earnest you will ascribe to the nature of the subject, and not to any mistrust of you.

I charge you, then, first of all, to preach Christ's GOSPEL in this place ; — not your wisdom, but his ; not your speculations, but his faith. Be the servant of his steady and everlasting truth ; — not of the opinions of theorists ; not of the measures of any partial combinations ; not of the passions of any local or temporary strife. Be the minister of the New Testament ; to enforce all its great doctrines, and diffuse its beautiful spirit among men. Do not narrow it down to the pattern of your own conceit. Do not vapor it away into loose abstractions, or heated and painted extravagances. Set forth the Christ of the Bible, and look for no other, and know of no other, — for there is no other. Preach not yourself, but him ; him, the chosen and sent ; him, the crucified, and risen, and ascended ; him, the power and counsel, the revealed testimony and love of God ; him, your master, as he said he was, or why are you here to speak in his

name? him, through whom a divinely attested religion has been transmitted to us and to our children, or what have you to do in his church? him, the way to the Father and life from the dead. I charge you, do your part to keep up this doctrine in the world; a world that is to be saved, as I believe, neither by any fierce philanthropy, however new, nor by any scoffing philosophy, however old, but by the Gospel of the Son of God. Maintain that religion, both as a belief and as an institution; as a covenant of merciful authority established between heaven and earth; as something already made, and not left for you to make, or to try what you can make of it.

Speak according to the Scriptures. Let them be your guide, for you will else be yourself but a blind one. You are set for their defence. I charge you to mark that. They are to be exposed to no disrespect and to suffer no betrayal in your hands. You are to explain their obscurer parts, as well as you can, into a just understanding. You are not to explain their clearest meanings away. Give no encouragement, by your manner of using them, to the pride of the skeptical, or the jeers of the half instructed. 'I do not tell you that all the parts of them have the same kind of truth, or the same degree of importance. But they are united in one series of sacred lessons; and each portion is entitled to some consideration, for what the whole is combined to express. As the hewn wood and the baked clay, that go to compose the temple of the Most High, are holy because they belong to the building, so the least of these should have

their proportions of reverence for the sake of the name that is enshrined in their sanctuary. Come to this people in the fulness of their most blessed communications. And if at any time — you will pardon me, Sir, a supposition that must be painful to you — you should be led into other and opposite views of what they contain, come no more at all. I deny to no one who claims it the Christian name, on account of whatever constructions he may put upon them. I would distinguish, as broadly as any can, his critical opinions from his religious character and moral worth. But if you find nothing in these books but an accidental collection of questionable writings, and a tissue of traditionary mistakes; if the English Deism or the German Naturalism, which are substantially the same thing, are the results of your reading in them; if the story of Jesus becomes to you but an embellished legend, with nothing of any inspired authority, and nothing out of the usual course; I then charge you to bear that witness, if you must bear it, in some other place. If religion is turned into a loose form of free-thinking or radicalism, I do not know why there should be a church over its head. It can lose itself in the universal, the absolute, the inane, without the solemnities of a ritual. It can scatter itself among the debates of the newspapers and the passions of the streets, without the help of ordinances. If a revolutionary socialism is to take the place of the regenerating Word; if mankind are to be redeemed by what a lively French professor has lately called “the gospel of Voltaire”; that is a gospel which you were not invited here to spread.



I charge you, further, to be a preacher of **RIGHT-EOUSNESS**. Give free scope to the principle, that a good life is the great condition of acceptance with God ; and inculcate it with all the pains you can bestow. While you maintain sound doctrine, insist upon the Christian virtues as the most precious fruits of doctrine. Show that you make more account of duties than of opinions. But, in doing this, do not slight the importance of correct religious persuasions. That is one of the shallowest errors of an ultra liberality. You have been ordained for the truth, as well as for virtue's sake ; to hold up the promise together with the law ; and, while you exhort men to obedience, to confirm them in the faith that best leads them to obey. Let your discourse prefer a practical bearing to a theoretic or controversial one. Point it at the heart and the conscience, rather than amuse with it the intellectual curiosity of men. Rebuke vice and wrong, as you see fitting occasion to do it and the right way to do it, whether they are of a public or private nature, whether they are in high or low places. Be not afraid to speak out the earnest convictions of your mind, on all subjects of social, moral, or religious duty.

You may be told that you will not be permitted to be thus guided by your sense of right ; that you are to be debarred from that ministerial privilege ; that you are to be exempted from that ministerial obligation ; that there are some topics interdicted to you, and some offences which you must lay no hand on. Sir, I do not believe this. You do not believe it.

You would not have come to stand where you are to-day, if you had believed it. I charge you not to act as if you did believe it. Be not afraid to bear witness, earnestly and aloud, as your best convictions and feelings prompt. If your manner of doing this is intemperate, or imperious, or insulting, or in any respect unwise, you are likely to hear from it; whether you speak in one desk or another. And it is best you should. The pulpit is free; but so are the congregation. You would not contend, I suppose, for an unbridled freedom, that acknowledges no decent restraints; or for an exclusive freedom, that would leave none for others. There is an independence that aims at despotism; that, not content with its rights, becomes invasive, and would dictate to the rest of the world. I charge you, neither grasp at its power, nor submit to its pretension. This is a responsible liberty, like every other. If it exceeds the bounds of propriety, or good sense, or good temper, it will be in some way told that it does. And this, too, is as it ought to be. Discharge your duty, and take the consequences. That duty is as likely to be honored, and those consequences are as likely to be blest, here as anywhere. If they should not be, let your patience endure it. And if you should ever suffer inconvenience or annoyance from the clashing of your opinions with the opinions of other persons, I need not charge you to avoid the burlesque of applying to yourself any sacrificial language, or of assigning to yourself a place among those heroic confessors who, not clad in comfort, and protection, and popular favor, but in bloody and blazing shirts, confessed to the death.

Respect the appropriate bounds of your own province. If you esteem them too narrow for you, you have not yet succeeded in understanding them. Have a care how you turn your select work of a spiritual guide into that of a schemer and a partisan. Proclaim righteousness, — pure, impartial, universal. But the zeal of that righteousness cannot have too little in it of the earthly fire that smokes and scorches; and you will not forget the words of the Apostle James, that “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

These words lead me to the last point that I wish to present. I charge you to be a minister of PEACE to this people. Bring the dispositions of it in your own breast. Send them abroad, as the wings of a dove, round the whole circle where you stand pleading in the name of the Prince of Peace. Love is the law’s fulfilment and the gospel’s glory. Let your discipleship be known by your overflowing measure of that. “Where strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” But “the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” “A bishop,” — and you are a bishop, so far as you are called to be an overseer of this portion of the Lord’s domain, — must not be “self-willed,” “no striker.” By that last phrase, the Apostle means the same thing that he said just before: You must not be contentious. There are strokes of the pen and of the tongue, that are as irritating as those of the armed hand, and as inconsistent with the temper of your profession. Use

your office to unite, and not to divide ; to reconcile, and not to embitter ; to heal, and not to wound. Attract strangers, if you can, by the lovely grace of your doctrine and example. Take care, at least, how you estrange friends. Bring here no disposition even to inquire into past troubles. Let them go down the wind, and be no more heard of. Open no avenue, leave no room, for any new agitation to come in. Fill this temple, where you are to speak openly, — fill the paths of your ministerial walk, where your speech will be more low and confidential, — with the spirit of brotherly kindness. I charge you to have no dispute with your people. If you cannot remain without controversy, depart in good-will. If, from whatever cause, your position should become unhappy to you, or un-serviceable to them, offer the resignation of your place. That is always within your competency, and can never be improper in any one. If the offer is declined, and the separation that you propose is affectionately deprecated, you will be consoled and remain ; and if it is willingly accepted, it is time that you retired. I charge you to “ follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Lead the flock by the waters that are at the same time living and still. Seek their nourishment in pastures that are green, for there is enough elsewhere of flints and briers. And may the great Shepherd of souls guide you and them to truth, and righteousness, and rest !



## RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

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BY REV. CHANDLER ROBBINS.

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MY CHRISTIAN BROTHER,

WHEN we are assuming the responsibilities of an arduous office, whilst, with an humble sense of our own dependence and insufficiency, we look up to Heaven and invoke its blessing, it is natural for us to turn also towards the circle of our earthly friends for encouragement and aid. And when, entering upon new and important duties with a conscientious devotedness of purpose, we can be assured not only of God's approbation, but of their sympathy, we can bend our shoulders to the heaviest yoke with confidence and hope.

If, then, my brother, your prayerful eye has watched at heaven's gate, till it has been gladdened by a vision of the Father's smile upon your present undertaking, let this fraternal grasp, and the kindly tones of human friendship, be the pledges that a company of coadjutors encircle you, and that heartfelt sympathy is at hand.

If you were now for the first time inducted into the pastoral office, it would be my duty to bid you welcome to its untried duties and rewards. But you have already had personal experience of the toils of Christ's vineyard, and of the refreshment of its shade. You have borne the burden of the laborer, and enjoyed, I trust, much of his recompense. On these subjects, therefore, you do not need that I should address you.

All that devolves upon me, on this occasion, is to bid you welcome, in the name of these assembled churches and ministers of our faith, into this new field of Christian influence, and to extend to you, especially, the friendly salutations of your brethren in the city,—with whom your intercourse will henceforth be frequent, and your relations various and intimate.

You come from another ministerial association, bringing with you the esteem of its members, retaining, I doubt not, their friendship, and unwilling wholly to sever or forget the pleasant ties which have bound you to them. To that association, also, in your person, we would extend our fraternal greetings, and renew our expressions of fellowship and love. We trust that they believe,—what you will find to be the truth,—that the interest felt by the churches in the city towards those in the country is as great, to say the least, as theirs in ours; and that nothing which affects the condition of the most secluded village congregation is regarded in the metropolis with unconcern. Let me assure you, moreover, my brother, as the result of long experience,—whatever other opinion may have been entertained or expressed,—that gentler,

kinder, and warmer hearts do not beat in any circle of professional associates, than are to be found in the ministerial fraternity that extends to you its right hand to-day. I am sure, that, if its records for the last hundred years were to be searched, that scrutiny would reveal a condition of concord, forbearance, and amity, unsurpassed, for a period of equal length, in any ecclesiastical body on earth. Nor yet has that ancient harmony altogether ceased. The spirit of love that blessed the intimacy of the fathers — now united in their heavenly glory — still lingers amongst their descendants, unwilling wholly to depart, and ever revealing its presence anew, when, for a season, it has seemed preparing to take leave.

There never was a period, when it has been more difficult, or more important, to reconcile in our feelings and intercourse the two great principles of Liberty and Love, — to maintain the latter undiminished and undiluted, without interfering with or circumscribing the former, — to allow the mind and conscience of each individual to act with entire freedom, and, amidst the unavoidable diversities of opinion which must thence arise, to keep the heart from bitterness, and the tongue from reproach. This, my brother, is the trial which is proving the strength of *our* Christian principles, and testing the temper of our charity. We believe that it is possible for the Christian, in his own heart and life, to produce and to preserve this reconciliation, — to abide this trial, — to stand this test. But it can be done only through the action of the very highest faith, and the influence of the purest love.

You will agree with me that I am indicating one of the hardest and most intricate practical problems that a Christian minister of our denomination is called upon to solve. That it is capable of solution you cannot doubt. That you, and I, and all of us, may find in the Gospels, and in communion with the spirit of Jesus, that golden rule which is the only key to its solution, and apply the same to our Christian relations and intercourse, is the best wish that could be breathed in this expression of Christian friendship, — as the accomplishment of such a wish would be the perfect realization of that holy and beautiful unity which is typified by the rite we are performing.

Yes, that holy and beautiful unity! that true Christian fellowship which is so beneficent and so lovely, — like the dew upon the mountains of Zion, and upon which the Lord commandeth the blessing! — shall we not love its idea? shall we not continually labor for its promotion? shall we not make mention of it daily in our prayers? Be it not, O, be it not amongst the little band of brethren assembled here, and amongst the churches which we represent, merely symbolized by this apostolical ceremony, and brought to mind only on these solemn occasions! — but rather let it be cherished by us all, as our glory and our defence, — let it be maintained and fostered with a sacred care, in fulfilment of Christ's dying command, and as the most pleasing sacrifice to our Father who is in heaven.

And now, my brother, I close as I began, with words of encouragement and salutation.



We bid you welcome to this important and arduous station of Christian influence and labor. Welcome to this ancient and respectable church! Welcome to this fair and favored city! Welcome to the friendship and coöperation of your brethren and kindred in the faith! Welcome, also, to the untried destiny that lies before you! And may God grant that that destiny may be a long, an unblemished, a laborious, a faithful, a successful ministry, — a ministry whose arduous commencement shall nourish a devoted spirit, and call into exercise an indomitable faith, and be consummated in extensive usefulness, — a ministry which shall be to yourself as the trial of gold, the baptism of fire, and to your people the instrument of salvation, the inspiration of godliness and peace!

And long after these hands, which we thus clasp in fellowship, shall have become cold to the pressure of human love, and this encircling company of mortal witnesses shall have vanished from the earth, like the morning cloud, may this “branch of the Lord’s planting” be glorified; may coming generations be nourished by its fruit, and sheltered beneath its shade; and may the fellowship of us all be with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord!

## ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

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BY REV. E. S. GANNETT.

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THERE is a manifest propriety in the usage which of late years has grown up among us, of including in the services of ordination or installation an address to the people, who form one of the parties in the solemn transactions of the day. After the minister has been charged to be faithful to his work, and has received the expression of fraternal sympathy from the pastors and members of the churches invited to participate in the pleasures of the occasion, it seems almost necessary, to give completeness or proportion to these services, that words of counsel and congratulation should also be addressed to those in whose houses and hearts this ministry must find its field of action. You, brethren, at whose request the ecclesiastical council here convened have introduced the minister of your choice to his sacred office among you, will, therefore, receive as a fit expression of our interest in this union what it remains for me to say, in the name of this great body of churches, concerning your prospects and duties.

Let me, then, first of all, offer you our congratulation and sympathy. We congratulate you on the establishment of the Christian ministry within these walls, after a brief, but painful, interruption of its regular services. We rejoice, that, when circumstances, to which I wish to make no other allusion than as they bear an historical character, had caused a vacancy in this pulpit, you were disposed, and have been able, to prevent it from remaining an unoccupied post on the walls of our Zion. It should always be an occasion of rejoicing, when stability is given to the institutions of worship and religious instruction; and to the churches — may I not say to the inhabitants? — of this city, noted from its foundation for the regard in which it has held such institutions, it would have been a source of grief, if here they had been suffered to fall into decay. Your joy, brethren, in the import of this day's services, is our joy; interpreting them as we do, as significant of a spiritual union and a progressive sanctification.

It is on the presumption that you so understand their import, that I proceed to offer the few words of counsel which the time will allow. They must relate to your connection with your minister. It is of his duties in the relation which he holds to you that they who have addressed him have spoken, and it is of your duties in the relation which you bear to him that I may speak.

As the beginning and foundation of all the remarks I shall make, and of all that would be either pertinent or proper, I counsel you to regard this relation, which

you have voluntarily assumed, as an intimate and sacred relation. Such it is, whether you so view it or not. Your neglecting or refusing to regard it in this light will not change its character; but the benefit you shall derive from it will be affected by the judgment you shall entertain concerning it. It is a sacred and intimate relation, — few so intimate, none more sacred. You have chosen to create this relation; — see you that you recognize its obligations. They are not all on the side of the minister. You are bound to him, as well as he to you, by the terms of this relation. I speak not of terms specified in a written contract, by which you will be bound to pay him so much money for so much work, or to grant him such and such privileges. Mind that you are faithful to the letter of those conditions. But in fulfilling them you do not discharge your whole duty to your minister. There are duties not expressed in the contract, but implied in the relation, in regard to which you must be equally faithful.

And the first of these is, that you repose in him that confidence which shall grow out of a conviction that it is a close and sacred tie which binds you together. Treat your minister as your friend. Open your minds and hearts to him. Let him not be familiar with your faces, and a stranger to your feelings. He has a right to look into your souls and see what passes there. He has it, not because he is a minister, but because you have called him to be *your* minister. It did not belong to him two months ago; it does belong to him now. And if you now deny him the opportunity of



exercising this right, you will not only pain, but affront and defraud him. Though you should empty your purses at his feet, and your houses be as free to him as the common street, if you hide your inward experience from his eye, you will do him an injustice, while you do yourselves an injury, and the relation into which you have entered will prove a snare to your souls.

We enjoin it upon you to esteem this a spiritual relation. It entitles this Christian teacher and friend to speak to you on the most sacred subjects. He may claim the privilege of discoursing *with* you, as well as to you, of the wants and dangers of the inner life. Let him speak plainly, and do you welcome the freedom with which he may unfold the principles of divine truth in their application to yourselves. Encourage him to confer with you on your souls' position relatively to God and another world. Do not complain of the severity of his exposition of duty. If he should tell you that it is a strait gate and a narrow way that leadeth unto life, do not call him fanatical, or Orthodox, or by any other name which might express your dislike of his view of the matter, but believe what he says, and take it home to your hearts as a saying which you needed to hear.

If this mutual understanding of the relation which you hold to one another can be established between you, it will tend, more than any thing else, to make the ministry fruitful of good to you, and of satisfaction to him by whom it is exercised. With this agreed upon as the basis of your connection, you will be prepared to listen, and he to speak, according to the design of

the institution which he represents. This design is the spiritual edification of the people. The minister uses such means as he thinks most conducive to this end. Foremost among which means is preaching. One of your duties, then, is to hear him preach. "Of course," you may say, "*that* is what we have engaged him for." Well, then, carry out your purpose. Attend upon his preaching. You will not hear it, if you stay at home. You must come to "meeting," if you would know what is said in the meeting-house. And when here, listen. Do not go to sleep; there are other places enough in the world for that. Do not be thinking about your business; there is time enough on other days for that. Do not be dull and inattentive; that is uncivil. Do not carp and cavil; that is unfair. In all these ways you would treat your minister ill, but yourselves still worse.

And, that the sermon may be as a word spoken in season, listen not from curiosity, but with that seriousness of self-application which renders truth ever "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Your relation to your minister does not cease when you are out of his sight, to be renewed only when you meet him here or in your dwellings. It imposes on you the necessity of living according to his instruction; provided, that is, you believe his instruction to be a faithful interpretation of "the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Alike in the house of worship, and in the scenes of common life, and in seasons of peculiar trial, you must cause the word of the divine grace to take root, and grow, and bring forth

fruit, by keeping in mind the principle, that truth can become profitable to the sanctification of the soul only by the use which is made of it. You may listen every Sunday of every year of your life to such preaching as made Felix tremble, and yet, if you only listen as to a performance in sacred rhetoric, it will do you no good, — not the least. This is the great fault of our congregations, — that they accept the discourse of the preacher, not as an indication of the course which they must pursue, but as an exhibition of his views on a particular subject, which it is their office to criticise, rather than to reduce to practice. The notion, that the minister can save the people, or can act as their spiritual proxy, to represent them in the arrangements which may be made for their future welfare, and to secure a place in heaven for them, is generally discarded among us. But it does not, in all cases, seem to be remembered, that, if they cannot delegate to him this office, the people must work out their own salvation. The rejection of the old doctrine, without a recognition of that which should have taken its place, has left the people very much in the condition of the man who, when told that he must not look to the public charity for support, failed to receive the hint that he must now provide for himself. Of course, he died from starvation. How many of our people are starving to death, because they will not by an active faith convert the bread of life into nourishment for their souls !

Therefore, brethren, we charge and entreat you, as partakers with us in the grace of eternal life, to prove the efficacy of your minister's labors among you, and

to *give* them efficacy, by the faithful and Christian lives you shall lead. In this way alone can you show that you comprehend the design, or appreciate the worth, of the institution which dates from those words of our Lord to his apostles:—"Go ye and teach all nations to observe whatsoever things I have commanded you." *Observe*,—that is the hinge of the Christian life, on which every thing turns,—faith, hope, peace, salvation here, glory hereafter. If you do not "*observe*,"—keep, practise, exemplify,—you are no better than heathens; nay, not in so good a condition, for the very gospel in which you boast shall be to you a "*savor of death unto death*."

And remember, fellow-Christians, that the authority of this religion of ours, which it will be the business of our brother in future to spread before your understandings and to lay upon your consciences, is as wide as life, and as deep as character. It touches on every part of our intellectual or moral, our secret or social history. There is no one opinion which we can entertain, no one habit which we can indulge, no one practice which we can pursue, no one office which we can neglect, no one enterprise which we can either overlook or undertake, that is not judged by Christianity, and upon which, therefore, it is not of the last importance that our judgment coincide with that of Christianity. In other words, brethren, we must be earnest and thorough Christians,—religious men, religious women, from the least work of our hands to the inmost thought of our minds. This is what the Christian ministry contemplates as its le-



gitimate result. If he whom we have this day inducted into his office here should not esteem it the object of his labors, studies, prayers, life, to make you "perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," he will prove himself an unworthy minister, and the right hand of our fellowship he will have grossly misconstrued. And if you should not co-operate with him in giving to the gospel full dominion over your characters and lives, you will be entitled to the name of Christians only by a courtesy which regards geographical limits rather than spiritual claims, and will forfeit the sympathy which we have now hastened to extend to you.

I press this point the more, because there is at the present day a disposition both to underrate and to misunderstand the work of the Christian ministry. On the one hand, it is pronounced an institution which the age has outgrown, an encumbrance on the cause of truth; and any argument in its favor, an attempt to chain the people to an obsolete and effete agency. On the other hand, some persons appear to regard the minister as chosen to render certain services which he may perform in a perfunctory manner, — to prevent the church-doors from being closed on Sunday, to solemnize marriages, to visit the sick, and bury the dead. The time has passed in which the office was thought to confer sanctity, or to bestow a special dignity upon the incumbent. I am far from complaining that the minister is no longer an object of superstitious dread, or that deference is not paid to him in consideration of his office. I only point

out an unworthy judgment concerning the social position of the minister, which the people must correct by the proof they shall give of the efficacy of his services. Let them manifest in their characters the influence which the public and private ministrations of truth are suited to exert, and the clergy, as a class, will no longer be the object of dislike or distrust. It is the people who must restore the faded honors of the clergy, by carrying the instructions which they receive into the various concerns of individual and relative life. When they live as the discourses and prayers of the pulpit signify to them that they should live, he who stands in the pulpit will have his due share of estimation with the community.

Be it, then, your care, friends of this Christian society, to give all possible success to your minister's endeavours to promote your spiritual good. His success depends on you. I repeat it, the success of the ministry established this day at your request will depend on you. Its success in respect to the visible growth of the congregation will not rest wholly on him. And let me caution and implore you not to expect of him more than he can do; for he is but a man, and but one man, who cannot bend every thing to his own will or his own purposes. But more emphatically still do I say, that the success of his ministry among you, and within you, will depend upon yourselves. Our brother may preach as an apostle would have preached, and like an apostle may "spend and be spent for you," and see his toil rewarded only by the payment of an annual stipend, if you do not

accept his teaching, whether in this place or from house to house, as the rule and spirit of your life. And, my friends, let me tell you, that, if he have the mind or heart of an apostle, he will not be able long to bear insensibility on your part to the force of his instructions. If you wish to subdue the energy of his will, to crush his hope, and convert him into a machine for the execution of certain clerical offices, a heartless, soulless, lifeless, useless minister, treat him with outward respect, but pay no regard to the lessons which he reads to you from the book of sacred wisdom, or from the pages of his own reflection. Allow him no satisfaction in his work, tell the world by your conduct that his relation to you is only an outward relation, discourage him by showing yourselves inaccessible to any influence he can exert; and end this history of parochial justice and kindness, by turning him into a hypocrite, that he may live, or breaking his heart, that he may die. And when you have so kept the promises of this day, and so fulfilled the obligations you have chosen to assume to this victim of your cruelty, go ye yourselves and meet the judgment of another world!

But, Christian brethren, we hope and believe better things of you. We believe you will welcome the instructions and influences of the gospel, as they will be communicated to you by our friend. We commend him to your warmest sympathies. All that we have to say of his rights, or of your rights, is included in this one word. Where there is a true sympathy, there will be no conflict of rights. Concur with him in

the interpretation which I have now given of the design of his office, and you will neither attempt to curtail his freedom, nor fear that he will encroach on your privileges. Striving together that you may reach the perfection of the Christian life, you can only be helpers of each other's joy, and contention or antagonism will be as foreign from your experience as from the harmonies of heaven. Study the things that make for peace, both among yourselves, and with all men. Cast out all evil tempers from your hearts. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you." Ruin not the fair prospects which are now gathering over your interests as a religious society by renewing painful divisions. Avoid most sedulously whatever might make applicable to you the warning of ancient prophecy, — "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." Walk in love, in faith, in peace. And may the God of peace be with you and bless you. May the influences of our holy faith enrich and strengthen your hearts. May the fruits of love abound in the increase of those who shall be attracted to your fellowship. May this church resume the position of stability and prosperity, which it long held before the eyes of its sister churches. And may you and your children, and we and all this community, rejoice for years and years to come in the effects which shall have had their commencement in the solemnities of this day.



## ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE REV. DAVID FOSDICK, AS MINISTER  
OF THE HOLLIS STREET SOCIETY, BOSTON, TUESDAY, MARCH  
3, 1846.

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VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN, AND ANTHEM.

I. INTRODUCTORY PRAYER AND READING OF THE SCRIPTURES,  
BY REV. F. D. HUNTINGTON.

II. ORIGINAL HYMN.

O THOU, in whose eternal name  
Went forth the apostles' ardent host,  
Baptize us with the hallowed flame  
That fell from heaven at Pentecost !  
  
The fearless faith that cries, " Repent,"  
Thy servant's earnest message fill ;  
By thee the living Word was sent,  
Thy presence make it living still.  
  
Pour out its love on every heart  
That here on thy great mercy calls ;  
Relight its fire, its peace impart,  
Between this temple's waiting walls.

And while thy people bend and pray  
 Towards thy benignant throne of light,  
 Give answer in the dawning day  
 Of Freedom, Mercy, Truth, and Right.

Immortal Truth ! It lives in thee ;  
 Our hope shall lean on thee alone !  
 Thy Christ be all our liberty,  
 And all our strength and will thy own !

Father, whose heavenly kingdom lies  
 In every meek, believing breast,  
 Reveal before thy children's eyes  
 That kingdom's coming, and its rest !

Give thy Son's herald, from above,  
 The anointing of thy Spirit's breath ;  
 The faith that worked in Christ by love,  
 The trust that triumphed in his death ! F. D. H.

### III. SERMON, BY REV. DR. PUTNAM.

#### IV. HYMN.

THOU Lofty One ! whose name is Love,  
 Whose praise all nations swell,  
 Bend from thy glorious throne above,  
 And in this temple dwell.

Father, 't is thine, — this sacred hour, —  
 Thine let its spirit be ;  
 And while each tongue proclaims thy power,  
 O, turn each heart to thee !

Bless *him*, thy servant, — bid him here  
 Thy faithful shepherd stand,  
 To fold for thee, through many a year,  
 This little gathering band.

Bless him with grace their steps to lead  
 Where no dark tests divide,  
 To make the name of Christ their creed,  
 His life and law their guide.

Bless *them*, thy children, — them and theirs,  
 In all their ways below ;  
 Be with them, Father, in their prayers,  
 And with them in their woe.

Be with them when they come to die,  
 And make the summons blest ;  
 Then, in a better world on high,  
 Receive them to thy rest.

c. s.

V. PRAYER OF INSTALLATION, BY REV. DR. PARKMAN.

VI. RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, BY REV. CHANDLER  
 ROBBINS.

VII. CHARGE, BY REV. DR. FROTHINGHAM.

VIII. ORIGINAL HYMN.

THE patriarch's dove, on weary wing,  
 One leaf of olive found,  
 Within the narrow ark to bring,  
 When all the earth was drowned.

The dove of God in happier hour,  
 O'er Jordan's sweeter wave,  
 In symbol showed the Spirit's power,  
 That all the earth would save.

O Lord ! to this our sacred rite  
 Such gracious tokens grant,  
 As make thy temples, where they light,  
 Thine arks of covenant.

And still on life's baptizing tide,  
Or sorrow's bitter sea,  
Descending peace be multiplied,  
And hallow hearts to thee !

N. L. F.

IX. ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE, BY REV. DR. GANNETT.

X. CONCLUDING PRAYER, BY REV. MR. LINCOLN.

XI. ANTHEM.

XII. BENEDICTION, BY THE PASTOR.



Theodore Parker, and his Theology :

A

# DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE MUSIC HALL, BOSTON,

SUNDAY, SEPT. 25, 1859.

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BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

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SECOND EDITION.

BOSTON:

WALKER, WISE, AND COMPANY,

21, BROMFIELD STREET.

1859.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

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LEST the Unitarians, the Unitarian Association, or any others, should be held responsible for the following Sermon, I desire to say, that I wrote and preached it in my individual capacity, representing and compromising no one but myself. This is the first time that I have criticized, in any church, the specialities in theology of my friend, THEODORE PARKER. I have now done it in his own pulpit, to his own people, and with their full consent. If I am condemned for doing this, I can only say, that, in my view, we have too much theological *backbiting*; for what else shall we call it,—to preach to the people sitting in one church, about the errors of the people who are sitting in another? But when, as on this occasion, hearers are found candid enough to listen to both sides of important questions in Theology, it seems to be right and proper to use that opportunity, and preach to them.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

Boston, Sept. 29, 1859.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON AND SON,

22, SCHOOL STREET.

## DISCOURSE.

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John xiv. 28: "I GO AWAY, AND COME TO YOU."

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PEOPLE sometimes come to us when they go away ; nearer to us in their absence than they were in their presence. Jesus did not fully come to his disciples' understandings or hearts till he had gone away from their outward presence. The friend leaves us ; and then, from the little eminence of absence, we see and know him better than when he was more near. The little child goes to another world ; and the mother puts him into her heart, and holds him there, sanctified, glorified, transfigured by her love, for ever. The wife goes ; and the husband sits by his lonely evening fire, and recalls her acts of thoughtful love, disinterested kindness, and patient endurance, which he never noticed at the time. So the traveller, when close to the walls of Strasburg, looks up in vain to see the mighty tower of her minster : it is too near to be seen, eclipsed by lower walls and buildings. But, as he leaves the city, these sink and it rises, till they have sunk wholly into the plain ; and it stands alone in full sight, though miles and miles away. For, the greater the man, the more he needs absence and distance in order to be known. The greatest man who ever lived said that a prophet had not honor in his own country. He himself did not begin to be understood till the world had floated away from him three centuries' distance. By that time, it began to get a clear view of the Divinity

which was in him. It took many centuries more for it to see his Humanity. Hereafter it may see both.

Thus do absence and distance reveal men to us, and the greatest qualities of our friends are seldom seen till they are gone. They go away, and come to us.

But there may be made of great men these two divisions, — those whom we miss after they have gone, and those whom we do not miss. There is one class of persons whom we admire very much when they are with us, but whose places are easily filled; and another, whom we, perhaps, quarrel with while we have them, but miss and mourn after they are gone. The class which we do not miss consists of those whose greatness is in doing *better* than others what all are doing, in saying better than others what all are saying, in thinking out into clearer and more distinct opinion what all are dimly and confusedly beginning to think. We like them, because they are so like ourselves: we do not miss them, because fifty smaller men, combining their forces, are ready to do the same sort of work which the great man did. They originate nothing new, work out no new problems; and the waves of time soon rush together over the place where they go down.

The other class of great men consists of those whom we miss, because they were doing a work of their own, which no one else could do at all. These are originators, carving out their own way, thinking out their own thoughts, uttering and acting their own character.

I think that your friend and mine, Theodore Parker, belongs to this last division. His greatness is in the original force of his nature. He goes straight to the end, which his own mind has seen. He does a work of his own, which no one else can do; and now, when he is gone, we perceive it more and more.

Certain occasions remind us of certain men. Lord Bacon illustrates this in his "Advancement of Learning;" saying



that "learned men, forgotten in States, and not living in the eyes of men, are like the images of Cassius and Brutus in the funeral of Junia; of which, not being represented as many others were, Tacitus saith, '*Eo ipso præfulgebant quod non videbantur*,' — 'They were all the more conspicuous because they were not there.'"

Recently, in this city, we have had two ovations, accompanied with all manifestations of honor, to the memory of two of our departed great men. The first lasted two days; during which the city was moved by processions, funeral orations, funeral addresses, funeral speeches, by the tolling of bells and the firing of cannon, in honor of one of our most eminent lawyers; a man of great intellectual gifts, certainly, in his profession, and, in private life, said to be a warm friend and affectionate parent. But that which the public knew of him was, that he was a great and unscrupulous advocate; a man with marvellous power to make the worse appear the better reason; a man who had devoted the divine gift of intellect during long years to confusing Juries, puzzling Judges, making white seem black, and black white. The city of Boston paid such honors to this gentleman as it should reserve for its Franklins and Washingtons; and her judges and magistrates went from Faneuil Hall and Mr. Everett's eulogy to Essex-street Church and the remarkable funeral address of Dr. Nehemiah Adams, who told them how he had sent his pastor a royal octavo edition of Wordsworth, as a votive offering, on the birth of a child. To young, unsuspecting minds, this ceremony said, with all the authority of age, station, and religion, "Young man, take this man as your model. Be, like him, brilliant and successful. Do not make it your object to pursue the flying footsteps of truth, but to succeed, to win your case, to dazzle with words, to confuse with sophisms. Do this; for this is the ideal standard of greatness in the city of Boston, in the middle of the nineteenth century after the coming of Jesus Christ." Therefore, gazing on that funeral procession, and running over the

pages of that tinsel rhetoric, I saw the face that was not present; I heard the silent voice—the face of our Boston Socrates—going up and down our city to search out its shams, and expose them; the voice always a terror to despots and sophists. “*Eo ipso præfulgebat quod non videbatur.*”

We miss the voice which would surely have spoken in clear, healthy words, to expose the demoralizing tendency of such an ovation. The value of such a man, and our need of him, was pre-eminently manifest after he had gone.

And again we miss him to-day; when, if he were here, he would stand up in this place to say some necessary words concerning the recent inauguration of the statue of Webster: for is it not necessary for some one to say that this glorification of a great intellect is demoralizing? The majestic understanding of Webster none are disposed to question; but it was not associated with a moral character corresponding to it. The facts of his private life are an open secret, known to all, though spoken of by none. Yet he is eulogized by Christian ministers, and his biography is written for Sunday-school libraries, because, in pure intellect, he was the foremost man of the land. So these Christian ministers preach to the people of their flocks and to the lambs of their fold, “Seek first, *not* the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, but the Kingdom of Intellect and its successes.” Already in this land we worship intellect and idolize talent all too well. Do we not need one man to denounce that increasing idolatry?

But there is another criticism on the pageant of last week, for which we need Theodore Parker. On the 7th of March, 1850, Daniel Webster ceased to be the leader of the Bay State. For the sake of that presidential chair, which, Mr. Everett admits, was the object of his ambition, he renounced Massachusetts, and became an apostate from her most cherished principles, which he called her prejudices. If those principles are true, they are vitally true; and perhaps the

politicians who profess to hold them, and yet care so little for them, will find that the people of Massachusetts are of a different mind. On the 7th of March, 1850, Daniel Webster became "The Lost Leader" of Massachusetts. From that day he was nothing to her, nor she to him. His is not the image to stand before her State House. If a Republican Legislature and Governor consent to placing it there, a more Republican Legislature and Governor may be called on to remove it. It is when such things as these are done that we feel the need and mourn the absence of Theodore Parker; and at such times as these, and in the midst of such ovations as these, our Brutus and our Cassius — our Theodore Parker and Charles Sumner — are the more conspicuous because they are not here.

There are few men in any community who can speak the Truth plainly. A thousand things are whispered in the ear in closets, are talked about by gentlemen sitting together around a parlor fire, which no one ever utters aloud. It is not always, nor usually, because men are cowards. Courage is not such an uncommon quality. But it is because they value other things more than the truth: they do not love the truth for its own sake. They ask, "What good will it do to say these things? Why wound people's feelings unnecessarily? Why hurt those whom we love; hitting our own friends through their friends?" The man who worships Truth for its own sake, and speaks, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, is like a cool wind from the North blowing away the miasma of stagnant air in tropical lands. Such an one was Theodore Parker in our community.

In passing from Theodore Parker the Man to Theodore Parker the Theologian, I go from the region of hatred and love, of hostility or friendship, into that of pure, cold thought. The question now is not, "Do you like or dislike the man?"

but, "What do you think of his doctrines? Are they *true*, or are they *false*?" Though I love Plato, I must love truth more than Plato; and I recollect that there is no one who has more strongly urged upon us to disregard authority in the search of truth than he whose opinions we are now to examine.

The first question in Theology concerns the Sources of Knowledge. From whence does our religion come? Where are we to go for it? In what place shall we find it?

There are many answers to this question. Here are a few of them:—

The DEIST answers, "*We go to Nature.*"

The ROMAN CATHOLIC or PROTESTANT CHURCHMAN answers, "*We go to the Church and its Traditions.*"

The BIBLICAL PROTESTANT answers, "*We go to the Bible.*"

The MYSTIC answers, "We go to the Soul in its mysterious and higher moods, when abstracted from outward things."

The CHRISTIAN answers, "We go to Christ, as seen in Scripture, Christian History, or Christian Experience."

Such answers are given, with more or less distinctness, by these different classes. Theodore Parker gives a wholly different reply. Admitting all these as subordinate helps, the primal, adequate, and authoritative source of knowledge he declares to be the Individual Reason; not the faculty which *argues*, but that which *sees*,—the intuitive organ common to all mankind. This is not a *mystic* vision, for it is *rational* and *intellectual*; it is not a *special Inspiration*, for it is common to all men; it is not a Christian Experience, for it does not need the mediation of Christ for its action. It is an inward Eye, with which, as soon as it is open, we can perceive the three great facts,—God, Virtue, Immortality.

Perhaps this is the most original and important part of the work done by Mr. Parker.

It is true that Coleridge and many others have asserted the same fact, and claimed for Reason the same power; but not before has such a clear statement, fortified by such solid



reasons, been made in regard to the Intuitive Religious faculty. It was very necessary; for the existence and activity of this faculty are continually denied in the supposed interest of Christianity. They have been denied both by Orthodox and Heterodox Theologians,—by Mansell on the one hand, and by Andrews Norton on the other. Mansell, in the interest of High-Church Theology, tells us that we have no organ by which to take hold of the Spiritual World; and Norton declares, that man can have no intuitive knowledge, either of the existence of God or of his own immortality. Thus religious truth, not being perceived directly by the soul itself, must be received indirectly from without, through the senses. We may infer it by a process of reasoning from the works of nature, from natural order, or from miraculous interruption of that order. Taking the position, that all knowledge comes through the senses from without, and none through the soul from within, it follows that religious truth is not knowledge, but only belief; not certainty, but only probability: for, as we cannot perceive God, duty, or immortality, through the senses, they must be inferred by a process of reasoning from these sensible phenomena. They are, therefore, an inference of the logical understanding; therefore only a probability; therefore not knowledge. We have, then, only a probable God to oppose to a real World; probable Spirit to actual Matter; a probable future Immortality to an earthly life full of the most positive temptations and vivid excitements. Christianity, also, is made to rest on a long chain of argument; any link of which failing, the whole must go. For the argument stands thus:—

1. We infer the existence of God from the laws of the universe.

2. We infer the Divine power of Christ from his being able to suspend those laws.

3. We infer that he *did* suspend them, by the testimony of eye-witnesses who said so.

4. We infer that they said so, from the record of their speech in the New Testament.

5. We infer that this is a true Record, from its being quoted as such by a long file of Christian and Pagan writers, reaching back from the nineteenth century to the second.

Our faith in Christ must rest upon this chain of inferences, and is so made to rest by the Theologians who deny any intuitive perception of Spiritual things. From this sensational philosophy have naturally come religious Scepticism, Materialism, Rehabilitation of the Senses, Positivism, Science without God, and Atheism. I thank Theodore Parker for his energetic opposition to this doctrine; for his forcible assertion, in all his books, sermons, and lectures, that the soul has a power by which it can see spiritual things; and for thus teaching us that we can know God directly as we know the world directly; that we can know eternal life as certainly as we know temporal, be as sure of duty as we are of pleasure, and may rely on our inward experience in the last analysis as firmly as we can upon any outward experience.

Again: a natural and necessary inference from this doctrine has been, the distinction made by Mr. Parker between Religion and Theology; a distinction which deals a fatal blow to dogmatism and bigotry on the one side, while the principle out of which it flows destroys religious scepticism on the other. For the intuitive knowledge of God gives religious experience, while reflecting upon that experience gives theology, — the first belonging to life, and the second belonging only to opinion.

I wholly agree, I believe, with Theodore Parker, in the positive part of his Theology. In his recent work, he has given three great principles of religion, which the soul itself is able to perceive by its intuitive faculty; namely, "The Infinite Perfection of God," "The Adequacy of man for all his functions," and "The Absolute or Natural Religion." For what he has said, nobly and touchingly, in defence and exposi-

tion of these truths, in this book and elsewhere, against Atheism on the one side, and a narrow Orthodoxy on the other, I, for one, heartily thank him. I thank God, too, for raising up such a voice to speak in trumpet-tones in behalf of these grand ideas to a generation too much sunk in worldliness, too much held to the surface of life. How many there are whom this voice has recalled to deeper insight and higher aspiration; to whom it has revealed God, Truth, and Duty, as eternal realities; shown the awful nature of their Being, the wonderful capacities of the Soul, the great experiences of Human Life, and the infinite value of Existence! These things, names to them before, have become realities; and all life has assumed a new value under this sincere teaching. Equally grateful must those be who have been taught to distinguish the substance from the form, the essential from the unessential; have been emancipated from the letter into the freedom of the spirit; have found that religion was not a grovelling fear, but a courageous hope; that piety and humanity were its opposite faces; that all of life was sacred, and all duty religious duty; and so were led out of the clouds and mists of a narrow religion to the sunshine and free air of a manly piety.

But we all must have noticed, that, while great men and large bodies of men are usually right in what they assert, they are often wrong in what they deny. No man can see every thing: and most errors are defects; they come from what we omit to see. And this seems to have been the case with the Theology of Theodore Parker. Its positions are mostly right, its negations often wrong. And he has two mental characteristics which tend toward this kind of error,—the error of denying that which we do not see ourselves. These are the love of simplicity and the love of system; both admirable qualities, but each having its danger. Simplicity leads to clearness, decision, and strength. The more we simplify, the more clearly we see each important point.

But we may simplify too much, and make a thing clear by omitting part of the facts. This world is not simple, but very complex. Man's soul is complex; his life also complex. No simplistic theory will answer in Botany or Geology. Mathematics is not simple; nor is it probable that the laws of man's spiritual nature are exhaustively stated in these three propositions of our friend.

Another tendency of Mr. Parker's mind is toward System; also a very important and valuable tendency, but having its dangers also. By placing before us all the parts in their relations and congruities, it enables us to see the whole in its true perspective. We hold all the parts while we look at each. The systematic mind cannot easily be one-sided, nor is it readily confuted by the sudden production of an antagonist truth. All that Theodore Parker had gathered by patient study he loved to arrange, each thing in its place in the systematic whole. By a happy balance of joy in individual facts, and a strong desire for totality, he neither neglected the multitude of details, nor yet lost his way in this mass of facts. Some men's minds are filled with a great multitude of ill-assorted knowledges, crowded confusedly together like the mob around a muster-ground. Others have a very small number of very well arranged and drilled opinions, like a militia regiment thoroughly organized as regards its officers, but very thin in its rank and file. The thoughts, opinions, convictions, and varieties of knowledge in our friend's mind are like a well-appointed and thoroughly organized army, with full ranks, beautiful in its uniforms and its banners, inspired by the martial airs of its music, complete in all arms,—infantry, cavalry, engineers, artillery,—marching to the overthrow of a demoralized and discouraged enemy.

System is good; but Lord Bacon said, long ago, that it has the dangerous tendency of "reducing learning to empty generalities, leaving only the husks of science,—the kernel being expelled by the torture of the method;" and also, that "me-



thods, carrying the show of a total, do secure men as if they were at farthest." Let us see if some such danger as this has not touched our friend's theology.

For example. It no doubt simplifies Theology to put Christianity in the same class with all other religions, only in advance of them; and to put Christ with Confucius, Zoroaster, and Mohammed, differing from them in degree, but not in kind. This Mr. Parker has accordingly done. Christianity is, with him, the natural unfolding of man's religious nature, like "the five other historic forms of religion," and "must, ere long, prove a hinderance to human welfare; for it claims to be a Finality, and makes the whole of human nature wait upon an accident of Human History, and that accident the whim of some single man." He thinks that Christianity, like all the other forms of religion, must ultimately fail before the Absolute Religion. Nor does he find any special life in Christ, differencing him from other men, so as to make him the leader of the human race, and a peculiar manifestation of the Divine; but a partial life, — narrow in some things, mistaken in others, and wrong in others, though much better, on the whole, than any thing else which the race has yet produced.

In this view of Christ and Christianity, Mr. Parker has been misled, I think, by the force of his simplifying and systematizing mind. My reasons are these:—

The fact that the whole Christian church, in all ages and sects, — Catholic and Protestant, — has recognized such a special revelation in Christ, though not without its importance, I do not lay stress upon, since the same claim has been made for many other religions. But there are far weightier reasons than these:—

1. Christ's own idea of himself and of his religion.

If Jesus is acknowledged to be an historical person, as our friend fully admits, we know him historically through the Gospels. Grant, if you choose, that they are not without some errors: still they teach *something* true concerning him;

for otherwise we should know nothing about him, and he would *not* be an historical person. But, if they teach any thing, they teach that he asserted of himself special and peculiar illumination; that he declared himself to be “the light,” not of the Jews, but “of the World;” claiming for his truth, that it was the Universal and Catholic religion. He declared himself to be “the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” — the way *to* God, the truth *from* God, and the life *in* God. He claimed to be the special revealer of the Fatherly Character of God: “No man cometh to the Father but by me.” He claimed perfect unison in spirit with the All-Perfect: “I and my Father are one,” — a claim never ventured on before or since by any human being who was not a mere enthusiast. He claimed immunity from moral evil: “Which of you convinces me of sin?” — “If I have done evil, testify of the evil.” In Him alone, of all the great teachers of mankind, humility and self-knowledge have not taken the form of a confession of ignorance, error, or sin. Socrates said that his wisdom consisted in knowing his own ignorance. Newton said that he was a child picking up shells on the shore of the great ocean of truth. The purest saints have made the most unreserved confession of their moral deficiency. But Jesus — certainly the calmest, wisest, least of an enthusiast, of men — shows nowhere the consciousness of sin or of error. *His* humility consisted in this, that, with the full consciousness of this exceptional position, he asked no honor for it, nor made any display of it, but considered it as given him by God providentially, for the special purpose that he might be by its means the servant and helper of his race. He was set apart from error and sin, that he might befriend effectually the most ignorant and the most sinful.

This consciousness of Jesus is an historical fact, which is to be explained. I see no adequate explanation for it but its reality.

2. In the second place, I think that such a manifestation of

the divine life in Jesus *was something to be expected*, and something which accords with the way of Providence and the reason of things.

In nature, we see a perfect manifestation of God.\* There is no blur in Nature's laws, — no failure in the return of her epochs: every cycle is exact. We can look back ten thousand years, or forward ten thousand years, calculating an eclipse of the Sun, and know that it has occurred, or will take place without fail, to the very second. Generation after generation, century after century, every genus, every species, of animal or vegetable life, obeys its unerring law. Every acorn which has germinated since the first oak grew has produced an oak; never any, by mistake or wilfulness, an elm. Every bee, since those which hummed in Eden, has gathered its honey or wax according to its unerring instinct. No passion — selfishness, wilfulness, or indolence — disturbs the perfect march of

\* Mr. Emerson states this difference in one of his poems: —

“Erect as a sunbeam,  
Upspringeth the palm;  
The elephant browses  
Undaunted and calm.

The leaves, unashamed,  
In difference sweet,  
Play glad with the breezes, —  
Old playfellows meet.

Sea, air, land, and silence,  
Plant, quadruped, bird,  
By one music enchanted,  
One deity stirred.

But MAN crouches and blushes,  
Absconds and conceals;  
He creepeth and peepeth,  
He falters and steals.

Infirm, melancholy,  
Jealous glancing around,  
An oaf, an accomplice,  
He poisons the ground.”  
    &c., &c.

the great Kosmos. Therefore Nature, so far as it does reveal God, reveals him perfectly. God's thoughts of Space and Time, of Substance and Form, of Cause and Effect, of the Infinite and Finite; the One and All of Order, Beauty, Goodness, Wisdom, Power,—these are distinctly revealed in the perfect mirror of the material world.

But there are other divine ideas, which *man* was made to reveal, but which he does not as distinctly reveal. These are the human ideas of Justice, of Holiness, of Fatherly and Motherly Affection, of self-sacrificing Generosity, of forgiving and helping Love, of pure Aspiration, and heavenly Condescension. These are thoughts of God too, but the human side of God's thought, which cannot be seen in Nature, and can only be seen in Man.

But all their manifestations in mankind have been imperfect and inadequate. From the lowest forms of savage brutality, of tyranny, cruelty, falsehood, and self-indulgence, men have struggled up toward greater purity, generosity, justice, and nobleness; but none have reached their perfection. Shall there be no apex to this ascending pyramid? no point where antagonist virtues shall be reconciled, conflicting tendencies harmonized, truth and love be married to each other? Should there not be one human being the centre of the human race,—a full manifestation of THE DIVINE IN MAN? So shall we see how man is made in the image of God; so shall there be one aim given, to which humanity may tend; so one Captain and Head of the human race, through whom we can all come into union with each other, having found the common type of humanity which we have, imperfectly developed, in us all. By the presence of one such being, the whole race can be organized. Through him we know each other. He is the fixed point, around whom we can all crystallize. Without him, we are separate and independent atoms; but in him we can all find each other. Moreover, seeing the ideal of humanity once fully realized in him, we may believe that it is possi-



ble to be realized in us all. We see in him—in whom human nature is complete—that sin is unnatural; that moral evil is not the law of our nature, but its perversity; that it must, therefore, be a temporary thing, growing out of the condition of human freedom. Therefore, since the hope, the strength, and the union of the human race seems to depend upon its having such a head, we argue that what Jesus claims for himself so calmly is that which we might expect beforehand to find.

3. *There is an actual revelation in Christianity, special to itself, of God.* There is something in Christ not found in Nature, nor known through the intuitions of Reason, but absolutely necessary for the peace of the soul and the progress of the race.

This special revelation of Christianity—the one peculiar Word of God through Christ—I find to be God's love to the sinner. It is a revelation of pardon to the Conscience, of peace to Remorse, of hope to Despair. It is God leaving the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and going to find the one lost sheep. It is the only solution of the problem of Evil; the only law which takes up all mankind, good and bad, into one family, making the whole human race strictly and truly brethren.

No other revelation of God says any thing plainly of this; none offer forgiveness of sin. The laws of Nature never pardon. Law, as such, cannot forgive: it can only reward obedience and punish disobedience. No intuition of reason, nothing in the absolute religion of the soul, says more. They say to the sinner, "Repent, Reform, Cure yourself. Do what you ought to do, be what you ought to be, and you shall then be forgiven." And this is inspiring for the strong soul, which is capable of breaking away from its evil, and becoming what it ought to be. But it does not meet the case of the sinner, in whom sin is disease; who has tried to reform, and tried again and again, and has failed; who is discouraged;

in whom the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak; in whom sin has become a *law*, warring against the law of his mind; and who cries out in agony, Who shall deliver me from this dead body to which my living soul is fastened?

This is the case which Christ meets by his special revelation of God's special forgiving and saving love. As the mother is more proud of her strong, manly son, but loves more tenderly the sick, deformed, or crippled child; as the father rejoices in the virtues of his good, faithful, upright children, has them ever with him, and considers all that he has to be theirs, but yet yearns with a peculiar tenderness toward the poor, half-dead prodigal: so God, in Christ, manifests an infinite tenderness of pity toward the discouraged, the forlorn, the outcasts, and the reprobates.

Some do not need this for themselves. Those who are strong, whose course is straight onward, do not need it. I must frankly say, that I think Theodore Parker has not had any experience of sin in this kind. To him, sin is either ignorance of God's law, which he pities, and would enlighten; weakness, which he pities, and would help; or wilfulness, which he hates and rebukes. But sin as disease,—this profound depravity which has taken hold of the soul itself; not total, indeed, because united with a living conscience and living desire for good,—of this experience I see no recognition in his writings.

But how wide and how deep this experience is, we may conjecture from the great cry of mankind which has found its peace in this element of the Gospel. In some great leaders of the church,—like Paul, Augustine, and Luther,—all their life appears to flow out of this fountain of reconciling love. The Roman Catholic sees it in the mass and the sacraments; the Protestant, in the doctrine of the atonement; and ten thousand humble, simple-hearted Christians find it in Christ himself,—their Saviour, their Friend, their inward Support and Joy. The power of the Reformation was in a revival of

this vision of God's reconciling love, long overlaid with forms. This was the power of the great movement of Wesley. It is the power which to-day comforts and sustains the poor, the sick, the helpless and forlorn, with a peace which the world cannot give nor take away. I find this a special revelation of God in Christ, no doubt having its anticipations and suggestions elsewhere, but only perfectly mirrored in Him, the perfect human soul. As we see God's other attributes perfectly revealed in Nature, we find perfectly revealed in Christ his personal love to each individual soul, good or bad, only because it is his child.

In Theodore Parker's opposition to the MIRACLES of Jesus, I also find traces of his limitation by the methodizing tendency and simplifying tendency of his mind. If the phenomena reported in the New Testament are to be considered as violations of the laws of Nature, as Theology has often defined them, and as Theodore Parker defines them, they are open to grave objections. But they do not call themselves so; and the greatest Theologians in all ages have rejected this notion. They are the expressions of a hitherto unknown spiritual force modifying the action of the known laws which govern matter. The power of soul is supernatural always, and is always working miracles like those of Christ, though in lower forms. When the power of Love and Thought in Dorothea Dix conquers the raving frenzy of a maniac, and holds it suspended; when the power of Love in the Washingtonians overcomes the rooted habits of the drunkard; when Love and Thought enable a deaf, dumb, and blind child to communicate with the outward world; when Wisdom and Love in Florence Nightingale enabled her, a single-handed woman, to do what all the wealth, knowledge, and force of England could not do without her,—we see what Christ's miracles were, and what they meant. We are reminded of his promise: "Greater works than these shall ye do." That physical law should obey the force of soul is incredible only

when we regard outward nature as a machine, and its forces as unspiritual and dead. But if the order of Nature be spiritual, and not mechanical; if the great Spirit and his Angel-Ministers are present in sunshine and storm, in growth and decay,—then we can understand why the representative man, the central figure of the human race, the type of Mankind, should possess a royal power over Nature, and, by perfect truth and love, stand intimately united with its spiritual forces. The miracles of Jesus are the most sublime prophecy of the ultimate destruction of all evil by the advancing power of good. So let them stand, if unintelligible now, as prophecies of the future.

One word also upon Mr. Parker's criticisms on the Bible. He deserves only praise for his attacks, terrible as they are, upon that idolatry of the letter, which is the disgrace of the Protestant church; for his destructive argument against a blind faith in verbal Inspiration; and for his merciless denunciations against the claim for Scripture of an infallibility which it does not claim for itself. But is there no better and truer way than either a blind worship of the letter, or the treatment of the Bible as a purely human work? Can we not deny it to be an infallible composition, and yet believe that it is divine? Can we not admit that it contains some error, and yet ascribe to it the authority of a guide? Why not? Guides are usually fallible. Yet, when we find one who knows more of the way than we know ourselves, can we not follow him, notwithstanding his fallibility? Plato is an authority to the Platonist; and though he does not think him infallible, yet he does not immediately reject as absurd, or deny as false, that which he cannot understand. The student of Shakespeare, instead of rejecting the obscurities of Shakespeare, patiently studies them again and again; believing beforehand in the wisdom which he has not yet found. This faith in a writer is an immense help in our studies. But Theodore Parker, in his re-action against a superstitious



bibliolatry, shows less respect for the words of Paul than the Platonist feels for those of Plato, the Shakespearian for those of Shakespeare, or the Swedenborgian for those of Swedenborg. But if the inspiration of Paul be of a deeper and higher order than that of Plato or Swedenborg, as seems to be proved by the simple result of his life and writings, then his inspiration must have left its witness in all that he wrote; and all of it carries some weight of meaning. If we meet with any thing in these writings, so "rammed with life," which contradicts our present convictions, what shall we do? We may do one of three things: we may accept it at once, because Paul has said it; and this is what is done by the literalist. Or we may *reject* it at once as absurd or false; and this is what Theodore Parker would have us do. Or we may *wait*, neither accepting nor rejecting, but *looking*; believing that there is truth in it which is neither absurd, nor contradictory to other truths; having faith that a wise man means something when he talks, and that, if we seek for the meaning, we may find it.

These are my views, of course very briefly stated, of Theodore Parker, and of his opinions. We two have known and loved each other for some twenty years; but, during all that time, he has never loved my opinions, nor I his. My faith in Christ, as the central figure of the Human Race, the type of Humanity, and perfect manifestation of a personal God, has seemed to him overstrained, mystical, and without value. His exclusive reliance on Intuition, and his negative treatment of the New Testament, has seemed to me one-sided and destructive. My soul has felt the need of something more. By it I was not fed nor filled. In view of it, a certain shudder ran over me, as though the world was growing empty of life in the atmosphere of that theology. But the *man* was not cold; the *man* was not empty of life or of love, but filled with both. I have honored his manly courage, been

touched by his tender humanity, and grieved at the blow which terminated his labors here ; for *my* Saviour, *my* Christ, is one who will honor and approve the manly soul which honestly disowns him but lives for virtue, more than the painted hypocrisy which utters all orthodoxy and practises all meanness. If Christ be God the Son, second Person in the Trinity, I had rather stand before his bar with Theodore Parker, who denies him, but follows in his steps, serving humanity ; than with any Orthodox Doctor who writes South-side books to turn our sympathy for the oppressed into approbation for the oppressor. For the Christ of the New Testament (whatever be his rank in the universe) is one who cares nothing for his own personal position or honor, has no self-feeling to be wounded by any denial of his rights, and can never be offended by any mistake as to his office or authority. His holy anger is only for those who offend or injure his little ones,—his poor, his oppressed, his outcasts, his wretched, his forlorn.

I do not believe in the passing-away of Christianity before a more perfect faith. Christianity is to be the religion of the human race. It has all the elements of catholicity ; it is purely human ; it can take up into itself all forms of truth ; it has already adapted itself to the leading races of mankind. Born among the Semitic tribes of Palestine, a Syrian religion, it invaded Europe, and took possession of it. It passed from the Hebrew to the Indo-European race, from the Greeks and Romans to the Goths, the Franks, the Lombards, and the Scandinavians in England, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, till it reached the Indians of North America, and Africans of the Cape of Good Hope. Of all the Religions of man, no other has been thus able to take into itself all ethnic varieties, as well as every degree of culture ; meeting the wants of the African negro on one hand, and of Francis Verulam on the other. Nor is the highest idea of progress that which drops the past as it passes on to the future, and which

cuts off history from behind us at every step; but rather that which retains all threads of good from behind, while it goes on to new attainments. Christianity is a religion which comes not to destroy, but to fulfil; which gathers up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost; which accepts and sanctifies the good and the truth in all nature, in all human discovery, in all past achievement, but always adds that which is needed by them all. This religion, personal, with love as its centre, with peace as its legacy, with Jesus, Son of man and Son of God, as its great head and inspiration, — this is the religion which the noble mind, generous heart, and upright conscience, of our friend ought, as it seems to me, to reverence far more than he does. This religion is the great altar where all the tribes of many-languaged man may bring their offerings, — an altar grand as that Mont Blanc, the constant sight of which is now feeding his soul with beauty. He ought not to say to this religion of Christianity, “Give way to something better; you were a help once, but are a hinderance now;” but rather (as Coleridge to that awful and divine mountain) he should say, —

“Rise, oh! ever rise,  
 Rise like a cloud of incense from the Earth,  
 Thou Kingly Spirit, throned among the hills;  
 Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven.  
 Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,  
 And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,  
 Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.”





HENRY WARD BEECHER

AND

THEODORE PARKER.

MR. BEECHER'S REASONS FOR LECTURING IN THE "FRATERNITY COURSE;" BEING A REPLY TO CERTAIN CRITICISMS MADE UPON HIM FOR SO DOING; INCLUDING HIS OPINION OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

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B O S T O N :

A WILLIAMS AND COMPANY,

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## “TOTAL DEPRAVITY.”

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Our attention has been called to some remarks in the New York Examiner, a Baptist religious journal, in which we are called to account for certain words said to have been uttered by us in a recent lecture in Boston, and also for giving the lecture at all in the “Fraternity Course.”

Although several other religious journals, as I am informed, have commented upon the same topics, I select the Examiner's editorial for reply, for two reasons:—first, because I have not seen the others; and secondly and especially, because its tone is in the main kind. And we desire to say, that if all papers were as fair and frank as The Examiner, there would be more pleasure in the public interchange of views than is usually the case. And we beg the editors to understand the earnestness of our reply as applying more to the subject than to them.

We claim the parliamentary liberty of calling for a division of the question, and we shall print but half of their article this week, reserving the other portion for the next week:

“Mr. Beecher is not to be held accountable for a newspaper report of his words—unless, having knowledge that certain words are publicly attributed to him, he acquiesces in the report. The Boston Journal quoted him as saying to the Fraternity, that ‘every selfish man believes in total depravity,’ and added, that the remark was loudly cheered. Now, every man who has

discretion enough to speak in public at all, is bound to consider, not only whether a given sentiment is true, but whether it is true in the sense in which it will inevitably be understood by his audience. There are objections to the phrase 'total depravity.' In the sense which would, perhaps, be most obvious to ordinary minds ; in that sense, certainly, which Unitarians have diligently labored to associate with the words, they convey a falsehood. There is no wrong in discountenancing their use, for the purpose of substituting a phraseology less liable to misrepresentation. But that is a distinction which not one in a hundred of those who applauded Mr. Beecher would ever think of making. If he did say what is attributed to him, he must have been understood as denying and vilifying that doctrine of human nature, without which there can be no logical or reasonable necessity for a supernatural redemption. If he has been falsely reported, we should be happy to know it."

We admit in many cases that a man is to be considered as accepting words attributed to him, if, when widely published, and brought to his notice, he permits them to stand uncontradicted. But it is plain that this must not be formed into a rule, and that much must be left to the discretion of the persons concerned.

If there are a thousand little things trumped up for the sake of provoking an answer ; if men lie in wait, and watch how they may catch a speaker strewing words and speeches along the way of controversy, as corn is strewn toward traps, — is a man to run into the snare ?

Life would be a perpetual flea-hunt, if one were obliged to run down all the innuendoes, the inveracities, the insinuations, and the suspicions which the style of modern honor permits many religious papers to indulge in.

But, even where there is no unkindness meant, and when no meanness employs religion as a cloak, and even where words or opinions are attributed to a man which have some importance, it is a serious question whether he is *always* obliged to contradict, and whether he may not be allowed to employ his own discretion in denying some without implying any responsibility for all which he does not choose to deny.



Since we have been called before the public, we must be allowed to say frankly, that it would be utterly impossible for us to look after all the erroneous reports and the inaccurate statements which are continually made in our behalf. Hundreds of reports made for "substance of doctrine" by reporters not versed in religious literature, of sermons reported by letter-writers, and not a few more formal collections of sayings, and descriptions of things done or said, are sent abroad. Is a man obliged to put everything right in all these? Is he to be held responsible for sentiments or expressions sent all over the land by letter-writers, unless he every week comes before the public with a formal disclaimer, and reiterated explanation? If we did so, then, next, the very papers which require it would be the first to blame us for conceit in keeping before the public endless personal explanations!

But there is another side to this question. Have editors, religious and honorable men, a right to aid in the circulation of uncorrected statements, and hastily reported addresses, when they, above all men, know how seldom rapid speakers are correctly reported, and when, moreover, they have the *means of inquiring at head-quarters* as to the accuracy of any report? How long would it take to cut out a paragraph, enclose it to the person represented as uttering it, and say, "Is this correct?" — "Do you hold yourself responsible for this?" If it is not worth this trouble, then it is not worth inserting in the paper. But again and again, the most serious misstatements have been put in leading religious newspapers, whose editors almost passed my door daily in going to their office. But, while they reconciled it to their honor to give injurious reports a very wide currency, they did not deem it their duty to take the least pains to ascertain the truth of the statements?

But we have become so used to seeing misstatements and misconceptions that we scarcely lift our eyebrows any more at the most astounding things. Indeed, we kill them by silence; having found that they thrive more vigorously by the notice of a



From the N. Y. Independent of Jan. 6, 1859.

## “TOTAL DEPRAVITY.”

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But we have become so used to seeing misstatements and misconceptions that we scarcely lift our eyebrows any more at the most astounding things. Indeed, we kill them by silence; having found that they thrive more vigorously by the notice of a

denial. There was a story started some years ago that we began a sermon by the startling impropriety of the sentence, "It is damned hot." We took the pains to give this the most unequivocal contradiction, declaring it to be a lie out of the whole cloth, without the vestige or shadow of foundation of any kind whatsoever. But since this denial, the story not only goes a good deal better than before, but more and more persons are every month reported to me as declaring on their personal veracity, *that they were present and heard the speech*. Of course, such persons do all, without exception, tell a willful falsehood ; but we dare not say so publicly, for fear that they will fall into spasms of affidavits, and convert their guilt into permanent form, past all repentance.

Now, we beg to have it understood, hereafter, that all reports which represent us as saying what we ought not to have said, are undoubtedly erroneous ! Whereas, if the thing reported is good, wise, safe, and eminently proper, let it be taken for granted that we said it ! With this general rule we shall be content.

We now proceed to examine the allegation that we employed the term *Total Depravity* in a manner which produced upon the audience the effect of a fling at the doctrine of a man's sinfulness before God.

1. Even if the term *Total Depravity* were one deserving of respect, the use made of it by us, on the occasion referred to, could be tortured into an offense only by the most unreasonable theological jealousy. And those *who heard* the lecture do not seem to have felt any impropriety. It was the *report* of it, published the next day in the newspapers, and read in the study or editorial office, that excited so much anxiety.

We were illustrating the fact that a powerful feeling in action tended to produce the same feeling in other minds. We instanced the selfish man whose selfish feelings awakened like tendencies all around him, so that he roused up and surrounded himself with men's worst traits. Such a man is very apt to

inveigh against his fellow-men. They seem to him exceedingly wicked. To the selfish man all men seem desperately and only selfish. And here it was that we said that a selfish man always believes in Total Depravity. Though he believes nothing else, he is always a firm believer in human wickedness.

Now, we really think that one must be extremely anxious to be offended to find occasion of offense in this remark. And if the gentlemen who watch against the many headed-serpent of heresy had heard the context with the remark, they would have been saved from the assertion that it was cheered as a fling at the orthodox view of man's sinfulness. It was the whole hit at a selfish man's experience that drew applause — not any supposed subtle intimation of a doctrinal laxity on our part.

2. But although we did not employ the phrase *Total Depravity* in any opprobrious sense, at the time mentioned, we do not hesitate to say now, that we regard it as one of the most unfortunate and misleading terms that ever afflicted theology.

It answers no purpose of definition or of description. It does not convey the sense in which the great majority of churches hold the doctrine of man's sinfulness. Instead of explaining anything, it needs explanation itself. Every minister who employs the term usually begins his sermon by saying that he does *not* mean the very thing which the words *do* mean. For, *Total* signifies a degree beyond which there can be no more. A total loss is one which cannot be increased; a total bankruptcy is one which could not be more complete; a total destruction is one which leaves nothing more to be destroyed. Men have a right to suppose that Total Depravity signifies a depravity beyond which there could be no more — nothing worse. This *is* the popular understanding of the term. The people go with the language, and not with theologians. But this is not the theological meaning of the word. No man who uses the phrase believes men to be totally wicked, *i.e.*, so wicked that they cannot be more

wicked. If they can be more wicked, then they were not totally wicked before. And, just as The Examiner does, so do all sensible men. They do not use the term. They regard it as infelicitous. And yet when any one handles it roughly they are full of anxiety for the truth !

The word is an interloper. It is not to be found in the Scriptures. We do not believe that it is even to be found in the Catechisms and Confessions of Faith of Protestant or Catholic Christendom.

We do not feel called upon to give the mischievous phrase any respect. We do not believe in it, nor in the thing which it obviously signifies. It is an unscriptural, monstrous and unredeemable lie.

3. But, on the other hand, we do believe, with continual sorrow of heart and daily overflowing evidence, in the deep sinfulness of universal man. And we believe in the exceeding sinfulness of sin. We do not believe that any man is born who is sinless, or who becomes perfectly sinless until death. We believe that there is not one faculty of the human soul that does not work evil, and so repeatedly, that the whole human character is sinful before God's law. We believe man's sinfulness to be such that every man that ever lived needed God's forbearance and free forgiveness. We believe that no man lives who does not need to repent of sin, to turn from it ; and we believe that turning from sin is a work so deep, and touches so closely the very springs of being, that no man will ever change except by the help of God. And we believe that such help is the direct and personal out-reaching of God's Spirit upon the human soul ; and when by such divine help men begin to live a spiritual life, we believe the change to have been so great that it is fitly called a beginning of life over again, a new creation, a new birth.

If there is one thing that we believe above all others, upon proof from consciousness and proof from observation and experience, it is the sinfulness of man. Nor do we believe that any



man ever doubted our belief who sat for two months under our preaching. Nothing strikes us as so peculiarly absurd as a charge or fear that we do not adequately believe in men's sinfulness. The steady bearing of our preaching on this subject is such as to plow up soil and subsoil, and to convict and to convince men of their need of Christ's redemption.

But our belief of this sad truth is purely practical. We have no sympathy with those theologians who use Time as a grand alley, and roll their speculations six thousand years, knocking down and setting up the race, in the various chances of this gigantic theologic game,—what is the origin and nature of sin? Poor Adam! To have lost Paradise was enough. But to be a shadow endlessly pursued through all time by furious and fighting theologies—this is a punishment never threatened. Or, was the flaming sword of the angel a mere type and symbol of theological zeal, standing between men and Paradise for evermore! We take men as we find them. We do not go back to Adam or the fall to find materials for theories and philosophies. There is the human heart right before my eyes, every day throbbing, throbbing, throbbing! Sin is not a speculation, but a reality. It is not an idea, a speculative truth, but an awful fact, that darkens life and weighs down the human heart with continual mischiefs. Its nature will never be found in the Past. It must be sought in the Present.

We hope The Examiner will be satisfied that its fears are needless. We hope that we may hereafter speak lightly of the words Total Depravity without being supposed to doubt man's need of a Saviour by reason of his sinfulness.

We heartily hate the phrase Total Depravity, and never feel inclined to use it, except when reading the ethics of The New York Observer, or the religious editorials of The Puritan Recorder.

## WORKING WITH ERRORISTS.

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Last week we made a partial confession of our Faith. This week we make a partial confession of our Practice. And we now print the entire first part of the article from The N. Y. Examiner, the last part of which it was more convenient to dispose of first :

### THE "FRATERNITY" AND MR. BEECHER.

In the congregation ministered to by Theodore Parker, at the Music Hall in Boston, known as the "Twenty-eighth Congregational Society," there is a literary association styled the "Fraternity." Said Fraternity has got up a series of "Fraternity Lectures," an avowed object of which, if a newspaper announcement may be credited, was to give to the ideas of Mr. Parker a freer scope than the Lyceum platform allows. But whether that was the purpose or not, it is manifest that the effect would be, so far as any impression was made on the public, to give increased popularity to the man and his "church." If the lectures prove, as has been claimed, "the most successful course of the season," they will reflect a certain luster upon the "Twenty-eighth Congregational Society," and upon the man whose infidelity is its pervading spirit. Such an effect, we should suppose, would be deprecated — at least, would not be even constructively aided — by a sincere friend of evangelical religion. But the pastor of the Plymouth church in Brooklyn has appeared upon Mr. Parker's platform, to lend to it his popularity. Mr. Beecher has asserted his right to do in all things what is right in his own eyes, and we are not disposed, even if we were able, to abridge his liberty. But it is utterly incomprehensible by us, how he reconciles with his love for the Gospel such open aid and comfort to its bitterest enemies. To appear with Mr. Parker, contemporaneously or successively, upon a platform which represents neither him nor his "ideas," is one thing ; to assist in

giving *eclat* to an infidel enterprise is a very different thing — and that is what every Fraternity lecturer, and every purchaser of a Fraternity ticket has done.

Of course we believe in newspapers, and in editors. Yet, even an editor may be mistaken, and a newspaper may fall into misstatements! And The Examiner has in this instance been misled by a too confiding trust in religious or secular newspapers.

It is true that the Fraternity Course was under the supervision of members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society of Boston, but it is not true that it was got up for the sake of giving Mr. Parker's "ideas" a freer scope than the Lyceum platform allows"—if by *ideas*, The Examiner means Mr. Parker's characteristic religious views. On the contrary, it was known that Mr. Parker was preparing four historical discourses, on Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, and (we believe) Franklin. But such was the ill odor in Boston of Mr. Parker's religious notions, that a studious care had been exercised to keep him from Boston lecture platforms, though history, art, or belles letters were his theme, lest the influence of any thing that was good in him should "reflect a luster" upon that part of him which religious men so much deprecate.

But, on the other hand, the attempt to suppress a man, and to silence his speech, on the great topics which are common to men of *all* religious views, must produce, not only among his personal friends, but among honorable men who utterly differ from him in religion, a determination that he shall have a chance to *speak*, at least; and then, if people do not wish to hear an "infidel," on secular topics, of course they can stay at home. In other respects, this Lecture Course was like ordinary courses. The only respect in which it was peculiar, was, that Theodore Parker was to deliver four lectures in the course, upon Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin.

The funds, over and above the expenses, if there should be any, were *not* designed to support either Mr. Parker or the

Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, of which he is the minister. They were to be employed in charitable purposes, and for the most part among the poor and unfriended !

And if the young men of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society of Boston judged that we were one who would be glad to co-operate with Theodore Parker, in all honorable ways which did not imply approbation of his theology, for objects common to all good men ; and if they judged that we should be forward to aid all measures, among all sects, which had for their object the improvement of the young, and the relief of the suffering, they judged rightly. We believe in the right of free speech, even of men whose speech, when delivered, we do not believe !

Did The Examiner think that the young gentlemen of Mr. Parker's society got up a course of popular lectures for the sake of covertly propagating infidelity, and invited me without disclosing the inward scheme, to garnish the course, and to lend my influence, blindfolded, to such an aim ? Or did it never enter the head of The Examiner that a man might associate with men from whose theological tenets he utterly dissented, because he sympathized with the special benevolence which they would perform ? because he had an *ethical* sympathy with them in spite of their theology ? because he believed that a good man ought always to seek occasions of working with men, rather than of working away from them ?

We should be sorry to suppose ourselves singular in this judgment. Are we to take the ground that no orthodox man shall encourage the young to self-improvement and to works of benevolence, unless they are sound in the faith ? Because Mr. Parker teaches a wrong theology to the young men of his charge, are we to hold off and refuse to help them when they endeavor to live a great deal better than we should suppose their theology would incline them to ? But this is the very case in hand. The young men in Mr. Parker's society undertook to do good by a course of general lectures ; we lectured in the course ; good papers are full of grief ; and The Examiner regards it as



“utterly incomprehensible.” We must be still more incomprehensible then, when we say, that, though we would earnestly desire men to believe aright in religion, yet, if they will not, then we hope that their life will be better than their creed. And, if we see men of a heretical turn of mind practicing Gospel virtues and charities, we shall certainly encourage and help them. For men do not derive the right to do good from the Thirty-nine Articles ; nor need they go to the Westminster Confession for liberty to recover the intemperate, set free the bond, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, educate the ignorant, and give sleigh-rides to beggars’ children that never before laughed and cuddled in a buffalo robe ! It seems to us a great deal better business for a Christian man to encourage men in well-doing than to punish them for wrong-thinking !

But The Examiner thinks that the success of this course of lectures will “*reflect a certain luster* upon the Twenty-eighth Congregational society, and upon the man whose infidelity is its pervading spirit.” Well, what then ? Are we to punish an infidel for his infidelity by refusing him all credit for personal goodness, for active benevolence, for practical humanity ?

If any body does right, he *ought* to be applauded. If Mr. Parker *does* well, he deserves the credit for well doing. If the young men of his charge do well, they deserve all the “luster” of it. Or shall we take ground that no man who is not of sound orthodox faith is to have any “luster” for practical virtues ? Must nobody be counted ethically right until he is theologically sound ? Such a doctrine would be monstrous ! Every just and generous man in the community ought to rejoice in the good conduct of every man, without regard to his speculative views or theological affinities !

If a man institutes a temperance movement, must I refuse to help him because, being a Universalist minister, his zeal and fidelity in that cause would “reflect a luster” upon him and his sect ? If a man would establish and endow a hospital, must I

refuse to co-work with him because, being a Unitarian, its success would reflect a certain luster upon that faith?

When, in the pestilence, in New Orleans, the Sisters of Charity did not count their lives dear to them, but night and day, fearless of death, and defiant of fatigue, gave their utmost being to the care of the miserable sick, must I, a Protestant, refuse admiration or fellowship for fear a "certain luster" would shine upon the Roman Catholic Church?

If a Jew does nobly, he deserves the luster which right-doing ought to confer; if an atheist or an infidel lives virtuously, and acts honorably, he should have the "luster" belonging to virtue and honor!

Does The Examiner think that we do not care for our own theologic views? We care a good deal. We shall yield them to no man's dictation. We shall not endorse any man's theology which differs from them. We have enough of the old disciple nature left to feel very desirous that folks who will cast out devils, should do it in our train. If they won't, — why, then, we will help them to do it in *their* way! But, if we were to help an Episcopal movement for general benevolence, would any man say that we endorsed High Church notions? If we were affectionately and urgently invited to Princeton, to examine the senior class in theology, and give them some tender cautions on parting from Turretin, and entering the life of realities, would anybody be so cruel as to say that we believed in High Calvinism, or were indifferent to all woes of conscience produced by that energetic system? Bishop Hughes will never invite us to speak in his new cathedral and we not promptly accept it. But we affectionately appeal to The Examiner whether, on such an interesting occurrence, he would think it his duty to pierce us with such remarks as are now puncturing our peace from his words?

If I had gone to Boston to buy carpets or books, or if I had gone to Boston to help the Republican cause, no question would have been raised. In selfish and worldly interests men are

allowed co-operation for common ends. But, if I divest myself of all selfish or secular aims, and rise to a higher plane of benevolence, and seek to raise the fallen, to restore the lost, to purify the vicious, to elevate the ignorant, and to cheer the poor and neglected, Christian ministers and editors will not let me co-operate for such divine objects with every man who will sincerely work for them ; but I must pick for men of right philosophy, for men right in all theology ! Thus we allow selfishness to go with flowing robes and a loose girdle. We make her feet light, and her hands nimble. But upon Religion we put iron shoes and steel gloves. We burden her with mail, and underneath it all we draw the girt of conscience to the last hole. Then she goes slowly forth, scarcely able to walk or to breathe !

I have long ago been convinced that it was better to love men, than to hate them ; that one would be more likely to convince them of wrong belief by showing a cordial sympathy with their welfare, than by nipping and pinching them with logic. And although I do not disdain, but honor philosophy applied to religion, I think that the world just now needs the Christian Heart more than anything else. And, even if the only and greatest question were the propagation of right theology, I am confident that right speculative views will grow up faster and firmer in the summer of true Christian loving, than in the rigorous winter of solid, congealed orthodoxy, or the blustering March of controversy.

Does anybody inquire why, if so thinking, we occasionally give such sharp articles upon the great religious newspapers, The Observer, The Intelligencer, and the like ? Oh, pray do not think it for any ill-will. It is all kindness ! We only do it to keep our voice in practice. We have made orthodoxy a study. And by an attentive examination of The Presbyterian, The Observer, The Puritan Recorder, and such like unblemished confessors, we have perceived that no man is truly sound who does not pitch into somebody that is not sound ; and that a real modern orthodox man, like a nervous watch-dog, must sit on the

door-stone of his system, and bark incessantly at every thing that comes in sight along the highway. And when there is nothing to bark at, either he must growl and gnaw his reserved bones, or bark at the moon to keep up the sonorousness of his voice. And so, for fear that the sweetness of our temper may lead men to think that we have no theologic zeal, we lift up an objurgation now and then — as much as to say, “Here we are, fierce and orthodox : ready to growl when we cannot bite.”

But The Examiner says : “The pastor of the Plymouth church in Brooklyn has appeared upon Mr. Parker’s platform, to lend it his popularity.” I neither borrowed nor lent. I went before, an audience in the Tremont Temple, the place for the chief part of public lectures, to give my own ideas, and to exert whatever power I had by my thoughts and by my feelings upon such audience as pleased to come. If they were good men, they needed me less ; if they were bad, they needed me more. But either way, I was responsible for my own testimony, and for nothing more ; and this was not lent to Mr. Parker, but to the audience. Yet, whenever Theodore Parker does what is right and noble, if it were possible for me to lend him anything I would do it gladly. I have nothing to lend, however, but good will, and that I never lend, but give as free as God’s air !

But, it will be asked, will the public understand your position, and, however you may design it, will not the impression go abroad either that you sympathize with infidel views, or are indifferent to them ? No. The public are just the ones who will not misunderstand. There is formed and forming a moral judgment in the intelligent part of the community, that popular Christianity needs more love in it. Men at large will be a great deal more apt to say that I have done a more exemplary Christian act, in daring to avow an *ethical* sympathy with Theodore Parker, between whom and myself there exists an irreconcilable theological difference, than if I had bombarded him for a whole year, and refused to touch his hand !

What a pitiful thing it is to see men, who have the chance of



saying what they believe, who do say it two hundred times a year, who write it, sing it, speak it, and fight it ; who, by all their social affinities, by all their life-work, by all positive and most solemn testimonies, are placed beyond misconception, — always nervous lest they should sit down with somebody, or speak with somebody, or touch somebody, and so lose an immaculate reputation for soundness ! Therefore men peep out from their systems as prisoners in jail peep out of iron-barred windows, but dare not come out, for fear some sharp sheriff of the Faith should arrest them.

If we held Theodore Parker's views, we should not wait to have it *inferred*. Men would hear it from our lips, and hear it past all mistaking. And we are not going at our time of life to begin to watch over our "*influence* ;" to cut and trim our sentences lest some mousing critic should pounce upon an infelicity and draw upon us a suspicion. We have never sought influence, and we never shall seek it. Any that we have now, came to us because we went straight forward, doing whatever was *right*, and always believing that a *loving heart* was a better judge of what *was* right than a cold and accurate head. Neither is infallible. Both make mistakes. But the errors of the heart dissolve in the kindness of men's natures as snowflakes dissolve in warm-bosomed lakes, while the errors of cold intellect pierce and stick like arrows. If I cannot make my people understand my belief, in fifty-two Sabbaths of the year, I shall not mend the matter by refusing to follow the generous sympathies of my heart.

No. The common people will not misunderstand. Nor will practical Christian ministers. They may differ from my judgment, but they will understand my deed. It is only those professed defenders of the faith, who, having erected suspicion into a Christian grace, practice slander as a Christian duty, that will be liable to mistake. And it makes no difference whether such men understand or not. These men are like aspen trees growing on rocks. In conceit and arrogance they are hard as gran-

ite, while they tremble all over like aspen leaves with perpetual fears and apprehensions of dismal mischief to come !

When Theodore Parker appears in his representative character at a theologian, I am as irreconcilably opposed to him as it is possible to be. The things that are dear to him, are cheerless and unspeakably solitary and mournful to me. The things which are the very center of my life, the inspiration of my existence, the glory of my thought and the strength of my ministry, are to him but very little. I differ from him in fact, in theory, in statement, in doctrine, in system, in hope and expectation, living or dying, laboring or resting, — in theology, we are separate, and irreconcilable.

Could Theodore Parker worship my God ? Christ Jesus is his name. All that there is of God to me is bound up in that name. A dim and shadowy effluence rises from Christ, and that I am taught to call the Father. A yet more tenuous and invisible film of thought arises, and that is the Holy Spirit. But neither are to me aught tangible, restful, accessible.

They are to be revealed to my knowledge hereafter, but now only to my faith. But Christ stands my *manifest* God. All that I know is of him, and in him. I put my soul into his arms, as, when I was born, my father put me into my mother's arms. I draw all my life from him. I bear him in my thoughts hourly, as I humbly believe that he also bears me. For I do truly believe that we love each other ! — I, a speck, a particle, a nothing, only a mere beginning of something that is gloriously yet to be when the warmth of God's bosom shall have been a summer for my growth ; — and HE, the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace !

And this Redeemer of the world, this Saviour of sinners, I accept, not only as my guide, my friend, my deliverer, but as an atoning God, who bore my sins upon the cross, and delivered me from their penalty. And, since my life is spared to me by him, I give to him that life again. This hope of Christ is the staff of my ministry. First, highest, and in measure beyond all

other things, I preach Jesus Christ. And all other topics are but arrows, shot out of this Divine bow. And this has been so for twenty years, eleven of which I have labored in Brooklyn. And yet The Examiner is pleased to reproach me, as if, against the sweep of my life, and the current and testimony of my being, I had gone to Boston to give "*eclat* to an infidel enterprise," because I gladly helped men who did not agree with me in theology to do deeds of mercy in which all good men are united!

What must be the condition of the public mind on the subject of Christian charity, when the simple co-operation of a man, on a ground of common benevolence, is made to signify more than his whole regular life-work?

The disposition to find some common ground of kindness and benevolence work, with those from whom we are known to differ, will be a real preaching of the Gospel to tens of thousands who are unmoved by dogmas or doctrines. It is Love that the world wants. When Love goes abroad in the full worth of its nature, and endures, and suffers, without reward except the sweetness of suffering borne for another, then men begin to see what is the heart and spirit of Christ, and to have some motions toward faith in him!

If tears could wash away from Mr. Parker's eyes the hindrances, that he might behold Christ as I behold and adore him, I would shed them without reserve. If prayers could bring to him this vision of glory, beyond sight of philosophy, I would for him besiege the audience chamber of heaven with an endless procession of prayers, until another voice sounding forth from another light brighter than the noon-day sun, should cast down another blinded man, to be lifted up an apostle with inspired vision!

But since I may not hope so to prevail, I at least will carry him in my heart, I will cordially work with him when I can, and be heartily sorry whenever I cannot.

While we yet write, word comes that Mr. Parker, broken down by overlabor, seeks rest and restoration in a warmer clime.

Should these lines reach his eye, let him know that one heart at least remembers his fidelity to man in great public exigencies when so many swerved, of whom we had a right to expect better things. God shield him from the ocean, the storm, the pestilence ; and heal him of lurking disease. And there shall be one Christian who will daily speak his name to the heart of God in earnest prayer, that with health of body he may receive upon his soul the greatest gift of God, — faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of the world.



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# HENRY WARD BEECHER

AND

## THEODORE PARKER.

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[FROM THE BOSTON LIBERATOR OF JAN. 21.]

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For having delivered one of the lectures of the very successful and admirable course projected by the 'Fraternity Association,' in this city, (composed chiefly of members of Theodore Parker's congregation,) Henry Ward Beecher has been assailed by the New York *Examiner*, an Orthodox journal, and represented as 'giving *éclat* to an infidel enterprise,' and thereby fairly subjecting to suspicion the soundness of his own orthodoxy! The absurdity as well as malignity of this charge is glaringly manifest from the fact, that the 'Fraternity' course differed in nothing from that of the Mercantile Library Association, or any other Lyceum, excepting that Mr. Parker was engaged to deliver four of the lectures—one upon Washington, a second upon Franklin, a third upon John Adams, and a fourth upon Thomas Jefferson; topics purely historical, and treated with that rigid impartiality for which Mr. Parker is noted; topics as remote from theological speculations as North from South. Evidently made

uneasy by this contemptible attack of the *Examiner*, Mr. Beecher makes an elaborate reply in the New York *Independent*, which we have transferred to the fourth page of our present number. It contains much that is sensible, makes some very good hits, and has an appearance of manly independence and Christian magnanimity; yet, as a whole, on a close examination of it, we are not favorably impressed with it, but think it is open to criticism.

In the first place, that Mr. Beecher should have deemed it necessary, in self-defence, to reply to such an attack from such a quarter, by protesting that he is no heretic, but still thoroughly orthodox, is symptomatically bad. It seems to indicate undue apprehension of public opinion, extreme solicitude for his orthodox reputation, a lack of manly independence. Why should he have deigned to notice the *Examiner*? Its *animus*, as exhibited towards himself and Mr. Parker, is so palpably mean and uncandid, so unjust and proscriptive, that entire silence in regard to it would have been a better reply than it is in his power to write, master as he is of all the elements of speech—far better than the article he has published in the *Independent*, excellent as that is in some of its features, and conclusive as it is in its illustrative and logical exposure of the folly and malignity of the *Examiner* article. If, as he pertinently says, ‘it is only those professed defenders of the faith, who, *having erected suspicion into a Christian grace, practise slander as a Christian duty,*’ will be liable to mistake or misinterpret his conduct in lecturing in the same

course with Theodore Parker, why should he give himself so much concern lest his religious position should be generally regarded as at least *quasi* heretical?

But, waiving this—admitting that it is sometimes doing good service to the cause of justice to publicly castigate an unworthy antagonist, and that in this particular instance such punishment was especially called for—we proceed to state wherein our regret is excited, and our sense of justice outraged, by what we find in Mr. Beecher's explanatory and defensive rejoinder.

The *Examiner* assails Mr. Parker for his 'infidelity,' and urges that no Christian should consent to stand on the same platform, even in a popular course of lectures, with such an 'infidel.' To this Mr. Beecher makes the satisfactory reply:—'If a man institutes a temperance movement, must I refuse to help him because, being a Universalist minister, his zeal and fidelity in that cause would reflect a lustre upon him and his sect? If a man would establish and endow a hospital, must I refuse to co-work with him because, being a Unitarian, its success would reflect a certain lustre upon that faith?' So far, well and true. But it will be observed that, throughout his article, Mr. Beecher has neither the fairness nor the courage, directly or indirectly, to question the propriety of the opprobrious epithet applied to Mr. Parker. Nay, he evidently assumes it to be unquestionable, and while graciously conceding to Mr. P. many 'eth-

ical' virtues, in no sense regards him as a religious teacher. Now it is of this injustice we complain, and of such sectarian narrowness we are ashamed. Mr. Parker claims to be as sincere, as conscientious, ay, and as enlightened in his religious views as Mr. Beecher himself; 'to his own Master he stands or falls;' his spirit is brave and excellent, his speech unfettered, his heart large and catholic. He is neither spell-bound by tradition, nor stultified by ghostly authority, nor victimized by pious credulity. He is a bold, open, indefatigable seeker after the truth—a man who dares to do his own thinking, speak his own thoughts, and reduce to practice the apostolic injunction, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.' The question with him has ever been, not, 'What is popular?' but, 'What is right?' His is evidently an investigating mind; his scholarly attainments are vast, and his analytical powers remarkable. Yet he is no dogmatist; he makes a wide margin of allowance for men and institutions, however wrong in his judgment; his charity runs to an extreme, we think, so as frequently to impair the force of his moral testimonies. Certain it is, he assumes nothing for himself which he does not cheerfully concede to every other man. He instinctively espouses the cause of the weak against the strong, the persecuted against the persecutors, the oppressed against the tyrannical. There is no reason to doubt that, had he lived in their times, he would have been with Milton and Hampden, with Bunyan and Fox, with Luther and Melancthon, with Jesus and



Paul, with all manly dissenting and truth-loving souls, who make up that noble army of martyrs and confessors, 'of whom the world was not worthy.' The question is not, whether his moral vision is equally clear in every direction, and on all subjects—we think it is not, though ours may be much more obscured; nor whether he has not made some mistakes, and fallen into some errors—for who is infallible? It is, whether, being what we have portrayed him, and living a life of great beauty, without moral blemish, and full of sympathy, benevolence, and good fruits—it is for such a man as Henry Ward Beecher, in many respects so kindred in spirit and purpose with Mr. Parker, to apply to him, or to admit that others are right in applying to him, the sneaking, malicious, proscriptive, abusive and lying epithet of 'infidel'! We submit, with a full appreciation of his great merits and many brilliant traits of character, that the antecedents of Mr. Beecher's history give him no superiority over Mr. Parker on the score of independent thinking, manly dissent, courageous protest, conscientious conviction, or religious enlightenment and integrity. His orthodoxy is undeniably traditional; his theological creed is everywhere dominant and popular; his views of Christ will be readily endorsed in Alabama by those who burn slaves annually by a slow fire, or at Rome, where dissent from *its* phase of 'orthodoxy' is treated as a damnable heresy. Under these circumstances, of what value is it as a test of Christian character? *Prima facie*, nothing. Mr. Beecher, in these particulars, is simply in the

fashion: where he would stand, or what he would be, in case the fashion should change, and orthodoxy should be popularly branded as 'infidelity,' remains to be seen we judge him not. We only say that it is not for him to make a parade of his Christian character as against the 'infidel' character of Theodore Parker. If the test given by Jesus be a sound one, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' in what is Mr. Parker inferior to himself? What if he is 'irreconcilably opposed' to Mr. P's theological opinions, does that make the latter a heretic? or justify the condescending inquiry, 'Are we to punish *an infidel* for his *infidelity* by refusing him all credit for personal goodness, for active benevolence, for practical humanity'? Mr. Beecher really plumes himself upon his magnanimity in being willing to stand upon the same Lyceum platform with Mr. Parker! This is ludicrous. In that juxtaposition, Mr. Parker is quite as condescending as Mr. Beecher, though it will never occur to him to make a show of magnanimity about it. There is no modesty, no humility, in Mr. B's reply to the *Examiner*, towards Mr. Parker. His theological dogmatism is papal; his assumption of saintship offensive; his evangelical egotism in bad taste. 'I differ from him [Mr. P.] in fact, in theory, in statement, in doctrine, in system, in hope and expectation, living or dying, laboring or resting.' A pretty clean sweep, truly! Where was the need of this invidious, ostentatious proclamation of antagonistic feeling? Was it to propitiate the *Examiner* and its harisaical clique? Do any others stand in need of

it? 'If I cannot make my people understand my belief, in fifty-two sabbaths of the year,' says Mr. Beecher, 'I shall not mend the matter by refusing to follow the generous sympathies of my heart'—no, nor mend it by making a fresh confession of faith in the *Independent*, under circumstances that look as if the object was rather to seize an opportunity for the removal of all suspicion of theological unsoundness, and adroitly to make capital out of a paltry and absurd issue, than to be truly just to Mr. Parker, who is so bitterly hated for his freedom of mind and exemplary life.

Mr. Beecher asks, with a slight flush of indignation, 'Does the *Examiner* think we do not care for our own theologic views? We care a good deal. We shall yield them to no man's dictation. We shall not endorse any man's theology which differs from them.' And cannot Mr. Parker use the same language to Mr. Beecher, in defence of his own 'theologic views'? Moreover, cannot Mr. B. conceive it to be within the scope of possibility that *he* may be, theologically, wrong, and Mr. P. right? Could he not have modestly suggested as much, without detriment to his Christian character?

One thing we are curious to learn:—Of what value, either to Mr. Beecher, or to any body else, are his peculiar 'theologic views'? He does not pretend that they make him a better man; *he divorces them entirely from ethics*; he admits they have nothing to do with PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS—in recovering the intemperate, setting free the bond, feeding the

hungry, clothing the naked, educating the ignorant, and 'giving sleigh-rides to beggars' children, that never before laughed and cuddled in a buffalo robe'—&c. &c. And if they are good for nothing in this world, is it not a delusion to suppose they will be of any special value hereafter? 'Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?' It was all very well—doubtless the 'evangelical' Jews might have admitted to Jesus—that the good Samaritan had compassion on the man who fell among thieves, and helped to bind up his wounds; but, alas! for the unsoundness of his 'theologic views'! He was nothing but an *ethical* 'infidel,' after all, with a spice of humanity in him!

Mr. Beecher is condemned out of his own mouth, when, in one breath, affecting to regard his 'theologic views' as of momentous and everlasting consequence, he in the next indulges in irony at the solicitude of 'a real modern orthodox man, who,' according to the *New York Observer*, the *Presbyterian*, &c., 'like a nervous watch-dog, must sit on the door-stone of his system, and bark incessantly at every thing that comes in sight along the highway; and when there is nothing to bark at, he must either growl, and gnaw his reserved bones, or bark at the moon to keep up the sonorousness of his voice.' A funny illustration, to be sure; but is the theme a funny one, and can there be too great vigilance or fidelity in maintaining the divine commands, or upholding doctrines deemed essential to the salvation of the soul?

It is not for us to enter the arena of theological strife; but we cannot refrain from referring to the



following extraordinary statement made by Mr. Beecher :—

‘ Could Theodore Parker worship my God ? Christ Jesus is his name. *All that there is of God* to me is bound up in that name. *A dim and shadowy effluence* rises from Christ, and that I am taught to call THE FATHER (!) *A yet more tenuous and invisible film of thought* arises, and that is THE HOLY SPIRIT (!) But neither are [is] to me aught tangible, restful, accessible’ (!)

What is this but saying that to him *God as a Spirit* is but a spectre, an incomprehensible conception ; and that he can understand him, believe in him, adore him, only as he appears in human form, and born of woman—‘ a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief’ ?

Such pious generalization is so indefinite and intangible that, like India-rubber, it can be compressed or stretched, according to the taste or caprice, the necessity or desire of the user. Christendom is full of it—Rome is saturated with it—this wickedest and most oppressive of all nations is overflowing with it. It is without signification, and therefore without value. It is traditional homage—an impulse of feeling—a flash of sentiment—a kindling of the imagination ; but it throws no light upon the brain, it does not mould the life. ‘ First, highest, and in measure beyond all other things,’ says Mr. Beecher, ‘ I preach Jesus Christ.’ But that language conveys no intelligent meaning to the mind ; for ten thousand conflicting sectarian clergymen say the same thing. When he declares, ‘ Christ is my God,’ *and therefore beyond*

*peradventure God*, he will do well to remember that he may be in error on this point; and, if so, it is a tremendous error; for 'God will not give his glory to another.' And it may also be well for him to reflect, whether, *if he had lived in the days of Jesus*, known his parents, seen him as a man, tempted in all points like other men, even though without sin, it is at all probable he would have believed or recognized one thus born and bred as the one living and true God, the Infinite Creator of all things, who is from everlasting to everlasting!

When Mr. Beecher says—'The disposition to find some common ground of kindness and benevolence work, with those from whom we are known to differ, will be a *real preaching of the gospel* to tens of thousands who are unmoved by *dogmas and doctrines*,' he utters an important truth, and virtually admits that his 'dogmas and doctrines' are without any vitality, and constitute no part of 'a real preaching of the gospel.' Why then contend so strenuously for them? Or why regard Mr. Parker as without the pale of Christianity, because he cannot subscribe to them? 'It is love that the world wants.' Most assuredly! And on this radical point there is no difference between Mr. Beecher and Mr. Parker: they separate from each other only when the question is one of 'dogmas and doctrines,' which are purely abstract, speculative, ideal, and in regard to which minds equally sincere and reverent will ever find cause for disagreement. Which of these earnest men shall accuse the other of 'infidelity,' because of this difference of

opinion? It will not be Mr. Parker. Shall it be Henry Ward Beecher? And when did he receive pontifical authority, or obtain the right to wear the robes of papal infallibility?

How much of Christian charity or humility is contained in the following self-complacent declarations?—

‘If tears could wash away from Mr. Parker’s eyes the hindrances, that he might behold Christ as I behold and adore him, I would shed them without reserve. If prayers could bring to him this vision of glory, beyond sight of philosophy, I would for him besiege the audience-chamber of heaven with an endless procession of prayers, until another voice sounding forth from another light brighter than the noon-day sun, should cast down another blinded man, to be lifted up an apostle with inspired vision!’

Mr. Parker, then, is to be regarded as another Saul of Tarsus, engaged in persecuting the saints, venomous against the Christian religion, groping in blindness, and needing a voice and light from Heaven to reclaim him! Of such vast importance, now, are ‘dogmas and doctrines,’ which, anon, Mr. Beecher pronounces devoid of all life-giving power! Now, volumes of such pious rhetoric, the product of excited veneration and ideality, are not as valuable as a single moral precept. It cannot be met by reason, nor answered by argument, nor refuted by fact. It defines nothing, and proves nothing, except that Mr. Beecher has a glowing imagination and much dramatic talent. Mr. Parker is no Saul of Tarsus, but a very different kind of person. It is not he who persecutes the saints; it is the *soi-disant* evangelical ‘saints’ who persecute

*him*, and would gladly silence his voice forever, if they had the power to do so ! Mr. B's illustration is as absurd as it is invidious and uncalled for.

He evidently considers Mr. Parker's case as utterly desperate ! Floods of tears and 'an endless procession of prayers' (!) will avail nothing ; and so like a careful economist, he neither weeps nor prays for him ! But this is only theological talk, and such talk is as 'empty as the whistling wind.' In his inmost soul, Mr. Beecher respects, loves and honors Theodore Parker as a true and noble man.

The last paragraph in Mr. Beecher's article, referring to the intelligence of Mr. Parker's illness, is tenderly expressed, and yet disfigured and tainted with the same religious egotism already commented upon. For instance :—'There shall be *one Christian* [Henry Ward Beecher] who will daily speak his [Mr. Parker's] name to the heart [query, ear] of God in earnest prayer, that, with health of body, he may receive upon his soul the greatest gift of God—faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Saviour of the world.' This was intended, we doubt not, to be kind and brotherly ; still, it has an air of self-righteous assumption and patronizing sympathy which greatly impairs its value.

'Of all the pride since Lucifer's attaint,  
The proudest swells a self-elected saint.'

We have felt impelled to make this criticism, not because we see eye to eye with Mr. Parker in all things—theologically or otherwise—but because we think it is due to the cause of religious freedom.



## TRIBUTE TO THEODORE PARKER.

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The morning discourse before the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society, at Music Hall, on Sunday, January 23d, was delivered by WM. LLOYD GARRISON. At the conclusion of it, the speaker alluded to the illness of Mr. Parker in the following terms:—

There is much pious exultation, I hear, in various quarters, at the illness of Mr. Parker, as though it were a visitation of Divine displeasure, on account of his alleged 'infidelity;' as though it were in direct answer to the stupid and superstitious, the ferocious and malignant prayers that were made in the Park Street vestry, during the late artificial revival, that the Lord would put a hook into his jaws, or paralyze his tongue, or in some way break him down, empty Music Hall, and scatter his congregation to the winds. What is this but the spirit that stoned the prophets, crucified Jesus, put to death the apostles, burnt the martyrs to ashes, imprisoned Bunyan and Fox, instigated the St. Bartholomew massacre, exiled the Pilgrim Fathers, and hung that noble Quaker woman, Mary Dyer, upon Boston Common—all ostensibly for the glory of God, and the extirpation of pestilent heretics, but really to gratify a ravenous priesthood and a corrupt church, that had 'stolen the livery of the court of heaven,' that they might serve the devil

therein with entire impunity? What is it but the spirit which tauntingly said, as Jesus hung upon the cross, 'He saved others; himself he cannot save. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him.' Which said of David, 'An evil disease cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more. When shall he die, and his name perish?' Which said of Jeremiah, 'Come, and let us devise devices against him; come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.' Happily, the fangs of the serpent are drawn; and though it has the will, it has not the power to execute its deadly purpose. To be hated, proscribed, anathematized by it is the best evidence of fidelity to God and man, and the highest tribute that can be paid to any one in an evil and corrupt age. What strange thing has happened in this particular case? Not until the self-styled 'orthodox' preachers cease to be mortal, and to die like other men,—not until they show themselves to be, by reason of their faith, beyond 'the ills that flesh is heir to,'—can they or their echoes take up the reproach against Mr. Parker, that his sickness is a token of Divine retribution. There is no such God in the universe. No—it is not for his 'theological heresies,' or his 'pernicious teachings,' that your beloved minister has been stricken down, but for his unwearied zeal and devotion in the cause of mental freedom, of religious liberty, of suffering humanity, which have overtaxed his brain, and drawn exhaustingly upon his

vital powers. 'The blessings of those who are ready to perish shall rest upon his head'—for who has been more thoughtful and compassionate towards the needy and oppressed, the 'perishing classes' of every description, than himself? In the largest and most practical sense, he has been eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and a mouth-piece to the dumb. He has done a mighty work for the enfranchisement of the human mind, on both sides of the Atlantic, in vindicating freedom of conscience, exposing religious hypocrisy, and showing what is merely 'transient' and what 'permanent' in religion. His name shall be enrolled, by a grateful and admiring posterity, high upon the list of the world's benefactors, alike in the field of humanity and the realm of thought. Wherever tidings of his illness shall spread, there will be great anxiety of mind, great sorrow of heart, and the most earnest invocations for his speedy restoration to health, on the part of the truly noble and good, of all who are divested of the hateful spirit of bigoted intolerance, of all who are able to perceive or appreciate rare learning and scholarly culture, moral heroism of purpose, spotless integrity of character, active humanity, consummate ability, and a beautiful life. Let us not despair of his recovery. 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.' We will at least hope for the best. No matter who may seek to disparage or revile him; we know him as one who

has proved his love to God by the love he bears for his fellow-men, and every other test is worthless.

In so much as he is both hated and feared by the traffickers in human flesh, and the venal accomplices of a heaven-defying slave oligarchy; by the whole tribe of hypocritical scribes and pharisees, and their deluded followers; by every wolf in sheep's clothing, by every low demagogue, by every enemy of human progress; in so much, and more, shall he be loved, revered and honored in the great Hereafter.

'By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'—'He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

'Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)  
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,  
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,—  
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,—  
An Angel writing in a book of gold.  
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,  
And to the presence in the room he said,  
'What writest thou?' The vision raised its head,  
And, in a voice made all of sweet accord,  
Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord!'  
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'  
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,  
But cheerly still, and said: 'I pray thee, then,  
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'  
The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night  
He came again, with a great wakening light,  
And showed the names whom love of God had blest;  
*And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!*

I leave this congregation to make the personal application.



THE

# CRISIS OF UNITARIANISM

IN BOSTON,

AS CONNECTED WITH THE

Twenty-eighth Congregational Society ;

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE

ORIGIN AND DECLINE OF THAT ORGANIZATION.

BY

BRONZE BEETHOVEN,

"A LOOKER-ON."

BOSTON :

WALKER, WISE, AND COMPANY.

1859.

it pursued (as we think it did) an inconsistent and suicidal course of action.

The Unitarians commenced their first prominent struggle for separate existence as a denomination, in New England, some forty years ago, when they took position against the exclusive ecclesiasticism of the so-called Evangelical or Orthodox party, protesting against that exclusiveness, and planting themselves on "the right of private judgment," "freedom of inquiry," and "liberty of conscience in matters of faith." About fifteen years ago, these principles were brought to a pretty severe test in the doctrinal issues raised about Theodore Parker, the character of his theology, and his right to be heard; which questions seem still to be rife, and to have lost but little of their interest. Indeed, the circumstances which have brought so frequently before the public the name and interests of this haunting heretic, recall forcibly to my mind the old controversy, on his account, in the years 1844-5.

It was a crisis not soon to be forgotten, so great were the interests it involved and the concern it awakened. One of the pamphleteers and reviewers of the time pronounces it destined to be "as marked a period in the history of Liberal Christianity in this country as the year of the Hegira to the followers of the Prophet." It sent a shock of self-inflicted injury and surprise through the so-called "liberal ranks" in the church, under which they have continued to stagger ever since. The events and discussions now transpiring are but the ripening or resultant harvest of their action then, and have the more interest as they tend so clearly to verify impressions, warnings, and predictions which the writer of this took occasion to express, relative to the ultimate issues of that action and controversy on the general welfare of the Unitarian denomination. It is in vain for this denomination to ignore the fact, for very plainly the fact is, that, from that time (however else they may try to explain or

account for it), its interests have continued to flag, and its vitality has declined. Neither Dr. Bellows, nor any others who are feeling the pulse of this imprudent invalid, and who discourse so anxiously about the critical condition of the patient,—advocating the necessity of a “Broad Church” for the better ventilation and revival of the sufferer,—have seemed to touch the real diagnosis of the case, or the actual secret and causes of the malady. With anxious solicitude they may hold their consultations and compare their recipes, fanning the feverish brow, and flinging open the windows and doors of their hospital, while they renew the query, “Can these dry bones live?” but by no activity of friction, by no forms of stimulating prescriptions, by no fumes of Catholic incense, by no array of ritualistic charms, expedients, or pictures before the glazed eye of their subject, can they wake it out of this syncope, or exorcise the unwelcome phantom of their discomfort. There stands the old ghost of their patient’s delinquency close by the bedside, startling every now and then the slumbers of the offender. That unwelcome spectre of the Past is up again before them, almost in grave-yard cowl, in the form of a little book entitled “Theodore Parker’s Experience:” and though, at sight of such a visitant, they may cry out, with Macbeth,—

“Avaunt! Take any shape but that!”

or, with Hamlet,—

“Stay, illusion! . . . What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse! again, in complete steel,  
Revisit’st thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous?”—

it is of no use; for this is, and will continue to be, the age of such “spiritual communications,” whether men will hear or forbear. Metempsychosis will have its way, now as ever, through books and pamphlets at least; and through that

medium some of us have got to hear and take "the rappings," whether we like them or not.

It is true, the volume referred to gives us nothing new as to matters of fact, or as to Mr. Parker's characteristic principles as a theologian. It is substantially an abstract or epitome of his former writings; the summing-up of incidents in his eventful, professional career; to all intents and purposes, an autobiography, and, of necessity, rather personal in its general character, and somewhat morbid in its tone. Though, ostensibly, a confidential letter to his congregation, there is no mistaking its intent as a public document; and, as such, it becomes a fair subject for open, frank, and free criticism. It is the same old story as to the wrongs he has suffered from the Unitarians (the details and reminiscence of which, we trust, may be duly sanctified to that respectable company of his brethren),—the recapitulation of his encounters, persecutions, and martyrdom; though it is difficult to see how such comfortable successes as he has realized, according to his own showing (overriding and supplanting his opponents at every turn, whether as a lecturer or preacher), and such almost autocratic and aristocratic popularity as he achieved, can constitute a very strong claim to our compassionate sympathy. "I think," says he, "few men have seen larger results follow such labors," &c. "Scarcely any American, not holding political office, has touched the minds of so many men by freely speaking on matters of the greatest importance," &c. This is true. So, on page 99, he speaks of having "many more invitations than he could accept, as a lecturer;" and says, "The lecturer's pay for each single night was more than the schoolmaster's for a month." He might have added, "More than that of some country ministers for a whole year!" As a memorial of his earlier habits of thought and inquiry, and as a statement of their later results or unfolding, and the position he assumed, the volume may have considerable interest; but we have nothing to do with it, at present, as regards



any critical estimate of its moral philosophy, social ethics, or theology. Such analysis and criticism have already been rendered by others competent to speak of them, and by invitation of his own people, between the very horns of his own altar. But there are certain errors and omissions, as to matters of fact, incidental and important, as it seems to us, and which claim attention so far as they are correlative and explanatory of the main incentives to that posture of antagonism he was forced to assume.

For some reason or other, Mr. Parker has omitted any allusion to the actual primary cause and chief provocative of his call from West Roxbury to Boston; and, consequently, the revolution in his whole experience. The simple fact is, he was fought up into place, and his position fixed by the collateral influences of a strenuous sectarian agitation growing out of certain pulpit exchanges. There had been some excitements, of course, as he says, and disaffections, in consequence of his "South-Boston Sermon" at the ordination of Mr. Shackford, and from his "Discourse on Matters pertaining to Religion;" but the real occasion of that excitement, which led, finally, to his inauguration as a preacher in Boston, was his exchange of pulpits, in November of 1844, with Rev. John T. Sargent, then minister of "Suffolk-street Chapel," in this city, and soon afterwards with Rev. James F. Clarke, of the "Church of the Disciples." The former of these exchanges, as is well known, was as the spark which fires the magazine, and, by arousing the remonstrance and concern of the so-called "Fraternity of Churches" (the constituency of the chapel and ministry aforesaid), rang an alarum, generally, throughout the Unitarian ranks. The latter, by disaffecting some of Mr. Clarke's parishioners, so that they seceded, and formed another short-lived church in Bedford Street, gave intensity to the general concern, and a peremptory sharpness to the countermand and the questions, "How far is Mr. Parker to be encouraged or recognized by us as a Christian

minister?"—" Shall *we*, as Unitarians, allow him?"—" Is he of us?"—" Is it consistent with our principles, as Christians, to grant him a hearing?" The excitement grew. The advocates of one or another course of action towards him took their positions, run up their flags, pointed their guns, and let fly their reports; some for all the freedom of the pulpit that was asked, others for its reservation and restriction: and so the main question was finally answered by Mr. Parker's being called to the "Melodeon" by a few earnest persons who had affinity, if not with all his heterodox freedoms, at least with the general principle of a toleration faithful and fearless, as also with the injunction to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

It was just at this point that a positive denominational or sectarian issue was presented, or rather a "family quarrel,"—the worst of all, because the most incurable. But, in our opinion, neither the "South-Boston Ordination Sermon," in particular, nor the "Lectures and Discourses" on theology, in general, had disturbing force enough, *per se*, strange and exceptional as they were, to have so agitated and thrown out of balance the whole Unitarian body, had it not been for the inquisitorial protest of a few ministers of the Orthodox churches calling on the Unitarians to define their position in the crisis. The interest in those theological developments, as we think, might gradually have subsided, had the Unitarians simply told their anxious neighbors to mind their own business, keep their own lamps trimmed, and watch their own altar-fires, ignoring or denying their responsibility or concern in regard to this troublesome heresy; or, in other words, had they let Theodore Parker alone. But they chose otherwise, and were whipped into "hot water," and catechized to death by such redoubtable and bigoted champions of the cross as Rev. Messrs. Fairchild, Driver, and Dunham,—the pastors, severally, of Calvinistic, Methodist, and Baptist churches in South Boston; who arraigned, through a tedious

discussion, the pastor of Brattle Street and others, participant in the ordination aforesaid, holding over them the awful charge of a complicity with infidelity and Deism, and the terrible hazard, —

“ Under which king, Bezonian?  
Speak, or die ! ”

The whole discussion was characterized by a most amusing series of quibbles and evasions on both sides, from beginning to end. Mr. Fairchild wrote long letters expressive of his concern for the welfare of Christianity and the unadulterated gospel; and so did “the beloved pastor of Rufus Choate,” Rev. Dr. Adams, who has since been preaching “South-side views” in favor of chattel-slavery! What the practical concern of such men is for the welfare of a pure Christianity, and “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” may be readily inferred.

But why did the Unitarians care then to hold a controversy or explanation with those reverend inquisitors, to the extent of nearly seventy octavo pages of foolscap, and all in the months of June and July? What obligation or call had they to answer this indictment? Had they only chosen then to show a “masterly inactivity” or indifference as to being “judged of men’s judgment;” had they gone manfully forward on that occasion, pursuing only “the even tenor of their way,” unconcerned about side-issues, and with loyalty to their first principles as to freedom of opinion; had they subsequently seen fit to let pass the act of exchange between Messrs. Parker, Sargent, and Clarke, — how different might have been the result! and how much less occasion now for anxious discourse and conference on the present critical state of the denomination, or “what the Spirit saith unto the churches”? The *real* voice of the Spirit unto the churches now is, “MENE, MENE, TEKEL!” and so, I think, is the judgment of the community at large, more especially towards the

Unitarian wing of the phalanx; eventuating, as the verdict has, in a general popular distrust of treason or inconsistency, and a growing reserve toward their organization.

Now, that such a denomination, standing, as its members once did, so bravely opposite the doctrinal errors and assumptions of this century, as Luther did against those of the sixteenth; confronting the Polytheism of a Trinity as he did the superstitions of Romanism; doing battle so nobly, as it has in former times, for freedom of inquiry, the right of private judgment, and liberty of conscience in matters of faith,—that a denomination like this, so courageous at the start, and so chivalrous in the inception of its purpose, should at last be frightened at its own shadow, I confess seems to me as amazing as it is mortifying and deplorable. In the full progress and dignity of their “forward march,” with their swords and lances “in rest,” or uplifted and waving over their heads, and the Protestant banner of the cross in their midst, they came to the brink of what they have always called the little narrow and shallow stream of rationalistic theology. Just then and there, instead of making a ferry-boat of their principles, wherewith to navigate and pass over this uncomfortable Rubicon, instead of bridging this chasm by the strong force of a tolerant spirit and by the compact consciousness of an indestructible faith, they cried out with alarm, lost heart at once, and were overwhelmed with concern. “By the rivers of Babylon they sat down and wept.” Sailing on these troubled waters, came that humble craft of a “revenue cutter,” called “Parker’s Theology,” which they magnified into the great piratical frigate and seventy-four-gun-ship of Infidelity and Deism; though its quarter-deck was crowded with noble purposes, such as the liberty, brotherhood, and rights of man; the hand of righteousness was on the helm; and the unity and love of God, as a banner, at the mast-head. They ought to have hailed it as an efficient and grand auxiliary, at least, in the general



crusade against wickedness, immorality, and superstition. Instead of this, they opened invidious fires, and were of course answered by that bold heresiarch with a cross-fire cannonade and broadside of "QUESTIONS," and "FRIENDLY LETTERS TO THE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION," to the right and left, which were never answered; while he kept sailing on to a measure of success unknown to his opponents. Surely the result in this case has been every way significant and admonitory to those who call themselves LIBERAL CHRISTIANS. And, in this connection, let us ask how and why it is, that the Universalists, as another phase of the so-called Liberal Church, with so much less of educational antecedents, so much less of social, intellectual, or ecclesiastical prestige or advantages in their position, have yet acquired and maintained so much more of actual and numerical advancement as a sect. It is certainly not because of their superior spirituality or intellectuality as a social force. It is because they have planted themselves, if not on a broader general basis of principles and doctrines, at least on a more consistent and *persistent* method of carrying them out. It may be said they had but "one idea," — hatred of orthodoxy; but then they "stuck to it." They may well be called the "fire-department" of the church general. They were organized against Calvinistic damnation, or "orthodoxy," so called, and for the extinguishment of hell-fire doctrines! And, if they had done nothing more than squirt water on that nuisance of a doctrine, — which is but the conflagration of common sense, and an insult to God Almighty, the loving Father, — they deserve credit, like any other good firemen. They have at least adhered to what they undertook, little as it was, — "a set-to" against everlasting torments, — with a singleness of aim quite worthy the consideration of others. Nor had they ever much love toward any who differed from them; not even for the Unitarians, their nearest of kin. They never professed much liberality of purpose, or sentiment of toleration, towards others; and it is very certain

they have not broken the pledge which they never took. Now, we may wince at the logical conclusion of this whole matter, or we may deny and seek to evade it; but there it is, inexorable, resolute, imperative, and unanswerable. The so-called Liberal or Unitarian Christians have not been true to their principles. Some few of them have since felt and privately acknowledged that they made a great mistake when they compromised the general breadth of their obligations to be free and tolerant. They wish it had been otherwise; but the mischief was done, and could not be undone. Hence their tendency to disintegration.

Certainly the people of Boston have had literally to "face the music;" for Theodore Parker has been either at the "Music Hall" or "Melodeon" ever since, till constrained by ill health to travel abroad, and sever his connections. And yet there is reason to believe that he might have remained to this day,—not an obscure preacher; for that, of course, he never could be, but, in all probability, the minister of a humbler parish, and certainly less notorious,—had he not been so metropolitanized, perforce, through the opposition he encountered. It was this antagonism that made him, through the acclamations and re-action of his friends, just the exceptional monstrosity he has become in the church,—a very thorn in its side, a glorified outcast, the greatest heresiarch of our times, and the theological autocrat of the people at large, goaded into power and place by the injudicious religious bigotries of his time, very much as Byron's poetry was lashed out of him by the provocations and folly of "English bards and Scotch reviewers."

The fact of the pulpit exchanges before referred to, with their consequent excitements, enforced, in Mr. Parker's case, the results, which, but for them, might never have happened. Rev. Dr. Gannett, in an able article in the "Christian Examiner" at that time, expresses this conviction very clearly. The controversy gave rise to various spirited documents,

discourses, and reviews, among which was one pamphlet entitled "TRUE POSITION OF THEODORE PARKER," by John T. Sargent, from which we quote the following:—

"The Unitarians may disown Mr. Parker, if they will: but in so doing, as we judge, they will disinherit their own child, their legitimate offspring; for he is as much and truly the fruit of their own primary principles as ever the gnarled oak was the product of a smooth acorn. As a system, Unitarianism began with a solemn protest against all exclusiveness or assumption in matters of faith; against the arrogance and dogmatism which would make a man's creed or opinions, merely, the test of his right to be called a Christian. It claimed for every individual the largest liberty of thought, conscience, and speculation," &c.

"The carrying-out of these principles to their utmost or legitimate conclusion has generated, among other results, the views of Mr. Parker. If such consequence seem to many no better than the edge of a precipice, they must remember, that, for them, there is no alternative but either to overleap it as they can, or go back and round some other way. But no, say the Unitarians: 'Mr. Parker is not of us.' Well, they may disallow or deny his right to any relationship or connection with them, if they please; they may cut him off: but, by all that is gracious in the heart of Unitarianism, it will bleed to death out of the very occasion where the knife of their excision is applied. . . . The fact is, Mr. Parker has now become, as it were, the embodiment of ultra Unitarianism, the personification of its first principles, the full harvest of a liberal theory 'run up to seed,' the farthest decimal of theological arithmetic. There he is, and we must make the best of it. We cannot so easily shake him off, if we would; and we ought not, if we could. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, —

'Armed at point, exactly cap-a-pie,' —

he will be ever rising up as a retributive admonition to Uni-

tarians, — the spectre of their past offences. In the midnight of their uneasiness he will come, as well he may, and tell of assassinations," &c.; "nor will he away, though we cry out ever so loudly at sight of the apparition, —

‘Angels and ministers of grace defend us!’ —

for he has yet a mission and a baptism, and will be straitened indeed till both are accomplished. In his researches, he has come to the vast cave of unfrequented truth; and, though his voice may ring there like the report of an overloaded gun, we must hear it, and stand the fire as we can, though it be to us as the crack of our doom as a denomination."

Now, after making all due allowance for the somewhat extravagant rhetoric of these passages, we must admit they have proved singularly premonitory, if we look at the present condition of the Unitarian denomination, and trace the legitimate causes of their decline. This abatement or loss of vitality, this "comatose" condition, "asphyxia," "paralysis," "suspended animation," or whatever else you please to call it, is admitted in all their recent reports and discourses, and in all their conventions; but they do not seem to see, or, at any rate, are slow to acknowledge, the real and seminal source of the trouble. Grant, if you will, and as in all candor we are bound to do, the influence of other outside causes in modifying and checking the growth and development of church organizations generally, such as the popular and general current of our literature, through which so much of a moral, intellectual, religious, critical, and rationalistic influence passes; our lyceum associations, surcharged with ethical power; our schools, colleges, Christian unions, philanthropic enterprises, and reformatory movements, all of which present spheres of action, and sources of influence, strongly competing with the church as an instrumentality for social improvement, while they take away much of the interest and obligation of what is called "going to meeting" on Sunday;



— still, I say, there is a large margin for speculation and inference as to the peculiar present position of the Unitarians, and the real causes of their alleged halting condition. It lies simply, as we have said, in their notorious disloyalty to the cardinal first principles of a so-called “liberal faith,” for which the community at large has not failed to judge them; their timid compromises with expediency; the fastidious etiquette of their pulpit ministrations, measuring so nicely and with such æsthetic reserve all the popularities of sentiment, and proprieties of speech, and so turning the edge and blunting the point of their appeals; in their want of manly, frank, straightforward, soul-stirring address from the pulpit, touching the prevalence of personal and popular sins; in the aristocratic secularity and listless disposition of their congregations; their want of “care to entertain strangers,” — even the strangers so nearly related to them, of rationalistic heresy and freest inquiry. They would lose nothing, and might have gained much, by the freest discussion of the various open questions of religion, science, and theology; but they chose otherwise, and, as we have seen, with discouraging consequences to their welfare, integrity, and peace. As Protestants, they are now admitted to be “at the apogee of their orbit.”

Dr. Bellows may deliver admonitory lectures on the necessity of a “broader church,” and Dr. Bartol may think he has double-locked the “Music Hall” by his “Key of the Kingdom;” but when they talk so sadly about “suspense of faith,” as if they were standing at the very foot of the gallows, it may be well to consider who did the hanging, and frankly confess that the Unitarians, if they *are* suspended, have been their own executioners! Report says we are to have a “re-adjustment.” Of what? — the slipnoose?

Now, how stands the actual evidence of this depression of their fortune, so far as visible statistics or outward manifestations are concerned? The whole story is told rather bluntly

in another discourse on the "Reform Pulpit," published a few years after the "True Position of Theodore Parker," and by the same author. He says, "Unitarianism never did a worse thing for itself than when it passed the sentence of proscription on such a man, or rather on the principles he impersonates. From the moment it so fell back from the one great principle of the broadest toleration, it received a stroke of paralysis in this city. Its numerical forces here, and its nominal relations everywhere, have continued visibly to decline for the last few years. It has but the mere name to live. Its tendency is downward as a sect. It has striven to struggle up against this oozing-away tendency by building, at great cost, one or two magnificent and stately churches, which are, after all, insolvent or in the market; or by coalition of one or two feeble churches: but it vainly resists the law of retributive decay which it incurred by recreancy to the one great condition of its life, — courageous toleration. It really seemed, at one time, as if this denomination were on the ascending scale among the sects, — a very Protestant among Protestants; but as soon as a strong crisis came, testing their boasted principles, ah me! they were just as weak as all the rest. Falling back, *in terrorem*, against the legitimate deductions of their principles, they have put on the shackles to their own wrists, and passed their own verdict of dissolution." Is it now questioned whether these conclusions are borne out by facts? Look, then, at Boston, the so-called "paradise of Unitarian ministers," and the citadel of liberal principles. While others of the so-called Evangelical or Orthodox denominations have been gaining, since 1845, some fifteen or more churches, the Unitarians can scarcely be said to have added a single one to their list. They had in that year but twenty churches, including all their chapels for the poor, which have no right to the name "Unitarian." They have but just that number now, and half of these so feeble they can hardly stand. So in the city of New York, after more than thirty years' trial

there to inaugurate a liberal theology, populous as is that metropolis, we find only two positively recognized or established churches of the Unitarian faith, and one of these accused and suspected of being in a transition state; while the actual growth and progress of liberal principles there must be estimated quite as much, we think, by the influence of our neophyte friends Frothingham and Noyes, or by such collateral and bold adventurers as Beecher and Chapin, as by any so-called churches as "All Souls" or the "Messiah."

Look, also, at the closer details of Unitarian experience and vicissitude in Boston, within the lapse of years alluded to. We confine ourselves especially to Boston in this matter of statistics, not only because it is called the centre of Unitarianism, but because it was here the war was first declared against rationalism. It was here the great battle for liberal principles was mainly initiated, and fought out; and consequently it is here we must look for the torn flags, the dismantled fortresses, and all the bodies of the wounded and the dying. What are the figures, then, of the past campaign? The "FIRST CHURCH" no longer tolerates "free speech" at old John Cotton's "Thursday Lecture," since the bold sermon there, in December of 1844, on "the Relation of Jesus to his Age and the Ages," but bears the symbol of its conservatism in the fact of its being tied by telegraphic wires to the church of Nehemiah Adams! The "SECOND CHURCH," in Hanover Street, after an extravagant struggle, — having, some years previously, excommunicated the saintly Emerson, — passed away by sale, as it were, under the hammer, to the Methodists; as did also the "SUFFOLK-STREET CHAPEL," more recently, to the Baptists. The so-called "CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR," which was got up under a spasm of displeasure towards Mr. Clarke, and of opposition to Theodore Parker, by some seceders from the "Church of the Disciples," was obliged to disband at last; dismissing its minister, and merging its remnants, and its name also, with other remnants of the old "Second Church,"

which took possession. The Church of "Indiana Street," once under the ministry of Mr. Fox, fell away, and got so reduced that a union with the "CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES" was its only and last alternative. "KING'S CHAPEL"—the very cradle and birthplace of American Unitarianism, the old progenitor of liberal principles, and so consecrated by the noble independence of James Freeman—cannot now settle a minister, on account of its miserable fastidious conservatism. It has forgotten and denied its "first love," and takes to its heart a policy which will prove the "dry rot" of its prosperity. The "THIRTEENTH CONGREGATIONAL" lost its minister, as we know, not long since, by his conversion to Episcopacy; and had to call for another (who still seems "a bird in the bush"), across the Atlantic, from the "mother-country"! The "NEW NORTH," I venture to predict, will go over to the Catholics in less than two years; and as to the "NEW SOUTH," or "CHURCH GREEN," it was but just saved from a talked-of union with "FEDERAL STREET" by the accession of Dr. Dewey. The rest, on the most charitable supposition, may be said possibly to have "held their own;" and, if even that is true, they are better off than we had supposed. The so-called "CHURCH OF THE UNITY," just completed at the South End, is no exception to the general statement, that there have been no visible or positive gains; for that church can hardly be considered even a fair offset to the transfer of the neighboring "Suffolk-street Chapel," and the well-known reduction of that congregation, or the forced and frequent amalgamation, to which we have alluded, of two feeble sections of the church, here and there, to form one firm one. We are aware that no mere numerical statistics constitute an infallible or ultimate criterion of the actual strength or weakness of a denomination, or the real progress and diffusion of its principles,—so many are the ways and avenues through which those principles may have course and consummation, without any visible count or manifestation of its converts. Even an army, reduced by charge



after charge on the battle-field through the blunders of its generals, the poverty of its accoutrements, and the errors of its tactics here and there, may be outflanking its adversaries in some other way, at some other points, or by outposts and allies which it does not see or recognize, — carrying, unconsciously, one after another of the positions and standards of their opponents, — and culminating to a general victory. The general absorption of more liberal principles by the Orthodox body cannot be denied. And this we suppose to be the actual position now of the Unitarian body: Fatigued by past conflicts; faint with loss of blood (though some contend it never had any); leaning over, in its hour of weakness, by the weight of its own panoply, with only the fragment of a dull blade in its grasp; and yet seeking to overload itself with more armor to drag it down, — it is yet a positive, philosophic, and spiritual force in the community; and, in relation to other erroneous systems of religion and theology, a no less positive corrective ingredient. It will yet hear the shout of triumph for liberal principles, if it will only wake up and live and listen; yes, and through channels which it has never yet recognized as legitimate, by means which it has even discountenanced or ignored, and through agencies of reform which it has spurned and deprecated.

It is for these reasons, then, that in our opinion, looking only at its outward and appreciable results as a system, Unitarianism deserves all it has got of disappointment, and qualms of conscience, for its ungrateful treatment of honest and conscientious dissenters, its shyness towards what is called radicalism, its timid conservatism, and its indifference and hauteur towards the great practical movements of the day. What an English writer of late says of the Unitarians in that country is equally true, and even more culpable, of the same class in our own. “The Unitarian body has been false to its own highest principles; and its best men see and confess the disloyalty. In former times, whatever was liberal and

enlightened found in them most zealous supporters. Now they are all mannerism, etiquette, generalities, and have no love to spare for any great movements of the day. In their churches, no Paul is heard to preach, and no Felix seen to tremble. Black must not be *called* black, to ears polite. The magnitude of 'the great social evil' which walks abroad in every street, at all hours of the night and day, must not be named in their presence. The artful doings, cheating, and lying, of men 'on change,' merchants, and manufacturers, must be winked at. You must not *speak*, far less *preach*, of loathsome habits. You must not demand a life in harmony with all divine law, — material, organic, and spiritual, — but be satisfied with some fine-drawn metaphysics. You must not insist on temperance, rectitude, truth, benevolence, inward purity, fidelity to liberty as a guiding star; but you must, instead, be content with some abortive straining, to swallow the authority of an ancient Hebrew book, special providences and divine interferences, sacraments, baptisms, and dead forms."

But to return to Mr. Parker, and his account of the commencement or inauguration of that enterprise known now as the "Twenty-eighth Congregational Society." We have something to say touching what we know of its inception, progress, and "manifest destiny." As a bold crusade against popular prejudices, it had certainly very much the appearance of "rash adventure," "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties," or "an expedition to the Arctic regions," so icy cold were the obstacles and discouragements by which it was surrounded.

In alluding to the final arrangements for his preaching regularly in Boston, at the "Melodeon," Mr. Parker writes: "So, one rainy Sunday, the streets full of snow, on the 16th of February, 1845, for the first time I stood before you to preach and pray. We were strangers then. I spoke of the 'Indispensableness of True Religion for Man's Welfare in his

Individual and Social Life.'” Yes, we remember it well, and who stood by him as pulpit co-adjutor in that double service at West Roxbury and Boston, on a wintry day, with clouds and lightning in the sky, and crowds of wet “seekers” after truth hurrying in to their unwonted places. The service of the afternoon following, it may be remembered, was by his friend Sargent, on “TRUTH-TELLERS AND REFORMERS, THEIR FATE AND FORTUNE;” he having been invited to assist Mr. Parker in the new organization, and consenting so to do for a few Sundays only, till some arrangement could be made for the dissolution of Mr. Parker’s connection at West Roxbury. The parochial movement was in charge of a well-selected Committee of nine gentlemen, not one of whom, I think, now remains a member of the Society; or, if only one, it is as the flint\* left in a gun from which the priming and the charge, and the chances of the accustomed good report, have been withdrawn. The Society has undergone and is undergoing great changes, through the illness of its pastor and from other causes. The original, persistent, Protestant energy, so full of nerve, which constituted the movement as an epoch of antagonism, offsetting the stolid and stupid sectarianism of the time, seems, in some degree, to have lost its edge, as if there were something slack or unmanly about it. It stood forth at first indomitable and true on the right and claim of a rationalistic heresy to be heard, and for the interests of straightforward, reformatory preaching, in contrast to conservative dulness; and, unless this speciality of the organization be maintained, it might as well disband. It has no mission or legitimate business outside of that purpose. It is no longer Theodore Parker’s Society, but is proceeding on “false pretences.” It may be all very well for the present conductors of the enterprise to be maintaining the general freedom of the pulpit and platform (we go for that decidedly, as a member of

\* Dr. John Flint.

the Society); and certainly they have been very liberal and eclectic in their far-and-wide selection of preachers and lecturers, of every possible phase and variety of opinion, eccentricity, idiosyncrasy, sex, and creed: but so far only as they articulate and respect the distinctive purpose of their organization can they realize or deserve support; and so far as they compromise or forget that speciality of their mission, by diluting themselves in generalities, or by absorption and falling back into the routine or embrace of ecclesiasticisms, whether Unitarian or any other, we protest against it. For though it may tend for an hour or so, each Sunday, to the refilling of the now precarious seats of the Music Hall with some transient parishioners of the elect preachers, giving *éclat* to the pulpit and platform, or aggrandizing their "Fraternity," it is easy to see that the inevitable consequence must be a growing distrust of the precise character or permanence of the Society, and its ultimate dismemberment. The Society is not what it was in numbers, spirit, purpose, funds, or characteristics. Always fluctuating and heterogeneous at best, the congregation seems now to have fewer and fewer of the once familiar faces or component elements since Mr. Parker left. They come and go like "passing generations," which "knew not Joseph" nor "Theodore," and according to their special sympathies with one or another occupant of the desk, but are soon gone again. This tendency to disintegration was more or less evident even before Mr. Parker's recent letter resigning his ministry. But that settles the matter. The Society is now foredoomed to a virtual dissolution. The withdrawal of their minister is explicit and final; and although, as a matter of form, they declined to accept it, they know perfectly well that he never will, nor do they expect he will, return to them as a preacher. Consequently, the main element and motive of their coherence is gone. They are quite conscious, and so is he, that to them might apply what a greater than Theodore Parker once said to *his* disciples,



"Without me ye can do nothing." The main spring and motive power to any combination of mechanical forces is not more essential than he to the continuance or integrity of his parochial circle; and as the inevitable tendency of an arch is to collapse when the keystone is displaced, so the removal of such an arch heretic must involve the dislocation of all the lesser "rocks of offence," and "stones of stumbling," that have surrounded him. To the best of their ability, the Parish Committee (with but few errors in their judgment and choice of preachers) have striven to check and counteract this tendency to dispersion of the Society by an occasional *ruse de chaire* in the form of sensation lectures and Emersonian flights of philosophy; but it is easy to see that a Society so constrained to hold together by a series of congenial methods and dramatic expedients cannot long sustain its individuality of character. Indeed, it never had a very fixed basis of association or consolidation. Its main element and motive principle has been not so much positive affinity with Mr. Parker and his views, as antagonism to whatever opposed them. Its members gathered because of their sympathy with an iconoclast. The real nucleus of the Society, — the actual germ, so to say, — around which other interests or attendants collected, was composed, perhaps, one-half of the old worshippers at "Suffolk-street Chapel," who seceded thence when their minister left in 1845, on the issue of restraints on his pulpit freedom, and partly of remnants from "Hollis-street Church," about the same time, and for a similar reason; nor can it be said to constitute, in the aggregate, more than one or two hundred persons.

So, when the crucible test comes, as come it will by the realization of Mr. Parker's final separation from their pulpit, it will be found that the only actual, visible, or available residuum is a "LYCEUM ASSOCIATION," instituted without any special reference to religious aims or affinities, and known by the title of "THE FRATERNITY," — a name which possibly

(without intending any sarcastic reflections on its prototype) it may have taken *in memoriam*, or out of "filial gratitude" to that "FRATERNITY OF CHURCHES" by whose motherly incubations, fifteen years ago, this "Twenty-eighth Congregational Society" was warmed up, and quickened into whatever of organic life and definite form it has had. Indeed, it seems to me, and has for some time past been apparent, that the religious organization and Sunday services are getting to be quite secondary and subordinate to this other matter, and only the "grist-mill" for the so-called "FRATERNITY." Or it may be there is reciprocity of service, and mutual dependence, — *vice versâ*.

Perhaps, after all, this is only as one of the "signs of the time;" the premonition, possibly, of a general proclivity in the Church at large toward something more hearty, fresh, vital, out-door, secular, and suggestive, than any mere Sunday preaching, however popular, can afford: for "if such things be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" It may be but the indication of "what we are all coming to," if the social, moral, and practical results of our religious machinery and associations are not somehow re-enforced by a more positive power. Nor do I think it a contingency or consummation to be cried over, or greatly to be deprecated, if not "devoutly to be wished" by all. If the Church will not wake up and behave itself, let us get something else in its place that will. Better for any and every church to hatch out something as respectable and as useful as a good "Lyceum," or to culminate and fructify in an energetic "Fraternity," than to be what so many of them are accused of being, — the "dormitories of the indifferent and worldly-minded," the "show-houses of Pharisaic formalism," the "nurseries of intolerance," or the "magazines of a purpose militant;" "houses of refuge for injustice" and the "masks of deceit," "hinderances of reform," "apologies for wrong," or the "bulwarks of slavery." And just here it is, I think, that the ex-

ceptional, noble, and practical character of Theodore Parker's ministry are made manifest by contrast.

Not as a theologian especially (learned and lofty as his position in that relation was) would I estimate or strike the balance of his claims and merits; but as a moral and social reformer, and as the absolute and rational religionist. It amazes me, that his people, through their Committee, have invited and courted public analysis only of his "THEOLOGY" from their pulpit. But what is this, as a speciality, compared with his "RELIGION"? It was only the heel of his system, like that of Achilles, the only vulnerable point, which his opponents, of course, have shot into as soon as they discovered the secret, and could get behind him; leaving him intact and invulnerable everywhere else: for we firmly believe, and have ever maintained by speech and in print, that by the diffusive power and tendency of his thoughts and writings as a moralist and theologian, breaking far and wide the spell of so many traditionary and too-long consecrated errors; by his matchless moral courage, and the uncompromising firmness of purpose with which he has so long "stood in the breach," or marched onward against all "the mailed hosts" and principalities of popular wrong; by his rare learning and research as a philosopher, and by his blameless and unquestioned integrity as a man,—he has compassed results for humanity at large, such as few ministers or preachers of this day have even contemplated, much less achieved.

We say, further, that (however much in that direction his influence may be ignored) probably through no one channel of religious enterprise has the great cause of Liberal and Unitarian Christianity more truly progressed, so far as reformatory ethics and a general doctrinal enlightenment are concerned, than through the ministrations of Theodore Parker in this city and elsewhere. By no one else, as by him, have the prevalent theological errors of our time — "that spell upon the minds of men" — so interlocked with all our social

relations, been so broken and scattered; and surely by no one more strongly than in his preaching have the charms of every virtue, and deformity of all vice, been set forth for our warning. And although, as a local or consolidated influence here, his ministry may not have come into that positive crystallization or completeness which it might have attained could Mr. Parker always have addressed those capable of systematizing more fully his principles; yet none the less surely, through all his published writings, as through his now so sadly stricken, oral address, will there go forth an influence and a revelation, as with outspread wings, for "the pulling down, everywhere, the strongholds" of error, superstition, and wickedness, and "for the healing of the nations."



*Not cut*

*21*

ORDER OF EXERCISES,  
COMMEMORATIVE OF  
REV. THEODORE PARKER,  
AT THE MUSIC HALL,  
On Sunday, June 17th, 1860.

# ORDER OF EXERCISES.

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## I.

VOLUNTARY ON THE ORGAN.

## II.

CHANT FROM PSALM CXXXIX.

## III.

PRAYER BY REV. JOHN L. RUSSELL.

## IV.

HYMN 95.

"While thee I seek, protecting power."

## V.

REMARKS BY CHARLES M. ELLIS.

## VI.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES,

READ BY JOHN R. MANLEY.

## VII.

HYMN 239.

"Nearer, my God, to thee."

## VIII.

REMARKS BY R. W. EMERSON.

## ORIGINAL ODE.

BY FRANKLIN B. SANBORN.

Fair summer glides, with face serene,  
Along the quickening earth to-day;  
In murmuring woods and pastures green  
The thrush and sparrow carol gay.

But ours must be the song of wo,  
And tears and wintry gloom are ours,  
For one brave heart that lies below  
The tender grass and laughing flowers.

Across the melancholy wave  
Our constant thought flies swiftly there,  
And lingers hovering round his grave,  
Amid the fragrant Tuscan air.

O, rest in peace ! from labors rest !  
Too long thy blest release we weep;  
Thy body sleeps in Earth's kind breast,  
Its loftier way thy soul doth keep.

With us, with us thy memory dwells,  
Forbids despair, and hushes strife,—  
Here most, where every echo tells  
The story of thy noble life.

Yet what can check our sorrow here?  
Or who more justly weep than we,  
While Love and Reverence force the tear,  
And Truth and Freedom mourn for thee?

### X.

REMARKS BY WENDELL PHILLIPS.

### XI.

HYMN 327.

"My God, I thank thee; may no thought."

### XII.

BENEDICTION.





## T R I B U T E S

TO

THEODORE PARKER,

COMPRISING THE

EXERCISES AT THE MUSIC HALL,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE 17, 1860,

WITH THE

P R O C E E D I N G S

OF THE

NEW ENGLAND ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION,

AT THE MELODEON, MAY 31,

AND THE

RESOLUTIONS OF THE FRATERNITY AND THE TWENTY-  
EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

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B O S T O N :  
P U B L I S H E D B Y T H E F R A T E R N I T Y .  
1 8 6 0 .

**CAMBRIDGE:**

Allen and Farnham, Printers.

# COMMEMORATIVE EXERCISES

AT

## THE MUSIC HALL.

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EXERCISES in commemoration of the death of the late REVEREND THEODORE PARKER, were held by the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society, in the Music Hall, on Sunday, June 17th. The capacious hall was crowded to repletion in every part, and many remained standing through the entire services, which lasted upwards of two hours.

Among the most strongly marked characteristics of Mr. Parker was a love of flowers. This extended almost to a passion. It was therefore in the highest degree proper, and also beautifully suggestive, that on this occasion there should be a floral tribute. Accordingly the altar at which he was wont to preach was literally covered with flowers, tastefully and elegantly arranged—the spontaneous gift of many friends of Mr. Parker. In front of the altar was suspended a CROSS composed of white roses and evergreen. On each side were numerous wreaths of variegated flowers, the rarest and most beautiful of the season; and upon the top at each wing were bouquets large in size, placed in vases. Close beside the Bible, was the favorite of Mr. Parker, the Lily of the Valley.

The exercises were commenced with a Voluntary upon the organ, which was succeeded by the following Chant by the choir :

CHANT FROM PSALM CXXXIX.

O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day : the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them. If I should count them they are more in number than the sand : when I awake, I am still with thee. Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me and know my thoughts : And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

A fervent and impressive prayer was then offered by Rev. John L. Russell of Salem. Mr. Russell dwelt upon the great loss which the Society and the world now experienced in the death of Mr. Parker. He alluded touchingly to the sorrow of the surviving partner and family relatives, and lamented the incompleteness of his great labors ; and concluded by imploring that the sad event might inspire



all who grieved his departure, to an increased activity and zeal in those principles and works to the carrying out of which he had sacrificed his life.

The choir then sung the following hymn, which, together with the other hymns, and the passages from the Scriptures, had been selected by Mr. Parker for this occasion, several months previous to his death.

### HYMN 95.

WHILE Thee I seek, protecting Power,  
Be my vain wishes stilled !  
And may this consecrated hour  
With better hopes be filled.

Thy love the powers of thought bestowed ;  
To Thee my thoughts would soar ;  
Thy mercy o'er my life has flowed ;  
That mercy I adore !

In each event of life how clear  
Thy ruling hand I see !  
Each blessing to my soul more dear,  
Because conferred by Thee.

In every joy that crowns my days,  
In every pain I bear,  
My heart shall find delight in praise,  
Or seek relief in prayer.

When gladness wings my favored hour,  
Thy love my thoughts shall fill ;  
Resigned, when storms of sorrow lower,  
My soul shall meet thy will.

My lifted eye, without a tear,  
The gathering storm shall see ;  
My steadfast heart shall know no fear ;  
That heart shall rest on Thee.

## REMARKS BY CHARLES M. ELLIS.

Friends: I *must* speak; but least of that of which my heart is full. I knew Mr. Parker well from the time of his going to West Roxbury. In his last letter to me, he writes, "There has never been a day since I left home that I have not often thought of your father and his dear ones. He is one of my oldest friends. His is the last house I was ever in at home except my own." Again that trembling hand wrote; but the mortal eye of that friend, the first to welcome him there and here, was not to read the written words. That friend had gone, I trust to welcome him again. Would that I could venture to try to pay tribute due to the friendship of so many years. But the day of his first illness, and that of his death, the very hymn he chose, which we have just sung, open such recent sorrows and quick associations, that I must turn away, with one glance, from old memories of his house at Spring street, over which the pines were always whispering; his library there, where that great soul was trained, mastering tools wherewith to do the work of the world, and the fair garden on which it looked; of his love for all without, within; of the village church, with its silent finger and its little band; the Sabbath school; of Brook Farm, where we lived—its woods and fields, and stream of gold and gems, dearer and fairer in the pictures which the child, the boy, daguerreotypes, than the poet or romancer can make them; of the old home—of the strolls there; of communion with minds of the past and the present there opened; and altogether from later and fresher things, for they would lead to that of which I could not speak.

I remember, even before that, how his stalwart frame swept along the avenues of Divinity Hall. I remember the manner of his early preaching. In that was shown what I

always thought the chief element of his character and source of his power. He was often utterly overcome by emotion; his utterance choked; tears flowed; his frame shook. It was beyond what was natural, even at that age. He has told us that "he preached only what he had himself experienced." Gigantic as his developed intellect became—great as were the treasures of learning he diffused—his greatest power was the native impulse of his soul—his affectional nature. No mind, no learning could express it. Though to the world they seemed solid as the ground, they only floated on its bosom.

Born on soil sacred to Freedom—of stock culled in England, and trained for two centuries in the best physical and moral culture of the world—himself reared in schools not the costliest, but the best—taught the love of labor, self-reliance, absolute reverence for God and conscience—he surprised the world by the intellect that embraced the will that moved it. But these only beat with the impulses of his mighty heart. I do not wish to vindicate all. But as the dust of earth shall fall, this element will justify much that is questioned now. He did not believe in calling black white. Let time and truth judge his sayings. What he spoke in love will live. Do you not remember how, in his discourse on Adams—when the building shook, and his voice was silenced as the ice and snow fell with the shock of an earthquake before the sun of Spring—he wished it so with the character he was discussing—with what joy he reviewed the glorious labors of the long Indian summer of that life, the rapture with which he hailed its closing act, summed up in that Saxon sentence, "the great loud *No* of an old man going home to his God?" Is the wail of a true heart over powers perverted—the "*woe*" of him who speaks in the cause of Humanity and God, to those who smite what they might save—to be condemned?

The Resolve "that Theodore Parker *should* have a chance to be heard" was more than the word of a friend, or a protest for religious freedom, or a plan for a free church. Before the South Boston sermon, it was known who and what was coming in this young preacher, who had said: "God still lives — man has lost none of his high nature;" and in his parable of Paul: "I shall walk by God's light, and fear not." It was thought that the *new truth* would be spread by his voice; perhaps not dreamed that one man could spread it so widely. But that simple Resolve, the seed of this Society, was dropped in faith that that truth would prevail — the mover of it having a year or two before, in a little book now forgotten, shown how it was the "basis of all true art, criticism, society, morals, laws, and religion." But of this Society:

*First* — We may be content to leave almost all, as to what he *undid*, that is matter of discussion at this day whilst partisans define their positions, priests their creeds, with a word which covers it all, *vera pro gratis*. If truth be started, let old errors go.

*Next*, let us look to what he created and *did*. He ascended to the sublime heights of philosophy and religion; by thought and study made clear to the intellect the truth that fired his soul, that "God is infinite Perfection, Power, Wisdom, Justice, Love," and plainly showed it to the world. He saw and showed how, historically and by nature, man grows in the light of love and has his eyes opened to spiritual truth, as flowers beneath the sun. He took Truth from books and scholars, Religion from temples and the priests, and showed them to common men.

His basis was *Man's intuition of God and direct perception of His Laws*. We see that the old theologies were most disturbed by his ideas; as Slavery was, of all institutions, most shaken by his labors. Probably time will show that



the most positive and complete of his intellectual works was his *Spiritual Theology*.

Calmly, and at length, alas with labor too great for that failing frame, thinking death near,—as he said, “up to his shoulders in his grave,”—he reviewed his work. He wished to live to round it off, hoping for the length of years and strength of his ancestors, but ready to pass the golden gates to immortal life. His work is fragmentary in relation to his idea, though so much is in itself complete. He tells us that after his discourse of *Matters Pertaining to “Religion,”* he formed a plan and prepared for the afternoon and evening of his days, to show the “*History of the Progressive Development of Religion among the leading Races of Mankind.*”

What a few in the groves of the academies by the lamp of philosophy, in moments of vision had seen, had become so clear to him that he would not only make it plain and prove it to the reason of men, but would traverse the history of the world and show its growth; show how, by either method, analysis or synthesis, this one truth was the culmination of human thought. Well may we leave theologues, Christologies, creeds, statutes, societies, governments, to take care of themselves.

Success! For fifteen years a free church; this truth embodied in labors for the dangerous, perishing, criminal classes; for education, woman, temperance, freedom, peace; its light thrown on the lives of our great men and heroes; put in volumes that will live with the English tongue; put into labors that now move and will move the American Church and State whilst they endure; set forth in a system of religion; a positive spiritual Theology; a method of spiritual culture; shadowing a scheme of ethics; containing almost the only fit attempt to state the law of Nature, the law of laws, in the language; his thought, his labor, his life—these are success and triumph enough.

After a life brief in years, but in labor how long, in stature how great, in purity how glorious on earth — his mortal robes lie under the skies of Italy. There let them repose, that pilgrims and patriots of the Old World and the New may go to a spot consecrated by blood that flowed thither from English through American veins.

He strove to gird them up for a few years' labor more in the service of God and man, but in vain. The soul that wore them was the world's. It speaks yet, and shall speak in pulpit and senate. Boston will thank him for the unequalled munificence of his charity; the Herculean labors of his ministry; the unsullied purity of his life. May she grow to see and live by his truth; last to have a just pride in being the home of this spiritual Columbus; forget his errors.

Men may raise monuments of stone; they will frame memorials more during in adamant speech. But he who stood here, above the world's fading honors, and his labors will outlast them all.

Our best tribute, — in the presence of the living spirit, the fittest in his sight, and the most lasting, will be the quiet vow not to falter in his work, and, as we may, in church, or court, or state, or common life, to keep in sight the light he showed us and follow its heavenly guidance.

## SELECTIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES,

READ BY JOHN R. MANLEY.

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one who loveth is born of God and knoweth God. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love, and he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out all fear, because fear hath torment. He who feareth, is not made perfect in love.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn; for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.



## HYMN 239.

NEARER, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!

E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me;  
Still all my song shall be,—  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!

Though, like the wanderer,  
The sun gone down,  
Darkness be over me,  
My rest a stone;  
Yet in my dreams I'd be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee!

There let the way appear,  
Steps unto heaven,  
All that Thou sendest me,  
In mercy given;  
Angels to beckon me  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee!

Then with my waking thoughts,  
Bright with Thy praise,  
Out of my stony griefs,  
Bethel I'll raise:  
So by my woes to be  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,—  
Nearer to Thee!

Or if on joyful wing,  
Cleaving the sky,  
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,  
Upward I fly;  
Still all my song shall be,—  
Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!

## REMARKS BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

At the death of a good and admirable person we meet to console and animate each other by the recollection of his virtues.

I have the feeling that every man's biography is at his own expense. He furnishes not only the facts but the report. I mean that all biography is autobiography. It is only what he tells of himself that comes to be known and believed. In Plutarch's lives of Alexander and Pericles, you have the secret whispers of their confidence to their lovers and trusty friends. For, it was each report of this kind that impressed those to whom it was told in a manner to secure its being told everywhere to the best, to those who speak with authority to their own times and therefore to ours. For the political rule is a cosmical rule, that if a man is not strong in his own district, he is not a good candidate elsewhere.

He whose voice will not be heard here again, could well afford to tell his experiences; they were all honorable to him, and were part of the history of the civil and religious liberty of his times. Theodore Parker was a son of the soil, charged with the energy of New England, strong, eager, inquisitive of knowledge, of a diligence that never tired, upright, of a haughty independence, yet the gentlest of companions; a man of study, fit for a man of the world; with decided opinions and plenty of power to state them; rapidly pushing his studies so far as to leave few men qualified to sit as his critics. He elected his part of duty, or accepted nobly that assigned him in his rare constitution. Wonderful acquisition of knowledge, a rapid wit that heard all, and welcomed all that came, by seeing its bearing. Such was the largeness of his reception of facts, and his skill to employ them, that it looked as if he were some President of

Council to whom a score of telegraphs were ever bringing in reports; and his information would have been excessive, but for the noble use he made of it, ever in the interest of humanity. He had a strong understanding, a logical method, a love for facts, a rapid eye for their historic relations, and a skill in stripping them of traditional lustres. He had a sprightly fancy, and often amused himself with throwing his meaning into pretty apologues, yet we can hardly ascribe to his mind the poetic element, though his scholarship had made him a reader and quoter of verses. A little more feeling of the poetic significance of his facts, would have disqualified him for some of his severer offices to his generation. The old religions have a charm for most minds which it is a little uncanny to disturb. 'Tis sometimes a question, shall we not leave them to decay without rude shocks? I remember that I found some harshness in his treatment both of Greek and of Hebrew antiquity, and sympathized with the pain of many good people in his auditory, whilst I acquitted him, of course, of any wish to be flippanant.

He came at a time when to the irresistible march of opinion the forms still retained by the most advanced sects, showed loose and lifeless, and he, with something less of affectionate attachment to the old, or with more vigorous logic, rejected them. 'Tis objected to him that he scattered too many illusions. Perhaps more tenderness would have been graceful; but it is vain to charge him with perverting the opinions of the new generation. The opinions of men are organic. Simply, those came to him who found themselves expressed by him. And had they not met this enlightened mind, in which they beheld their own opinions combined with zeal in every cause of love and humanity, they would have suspected their own opinions and suppressed them, and so sunk into melancholy or malignity, a feeling of loneliness and hostility to what was reckoned respectable.

'Tis plain to me that he has achieved a historic immortality here; that he has so woven himself in these few years into the history of Boston, that he can never be left out of your annals. It will not be in the acts of City Councils; nor of obsequious Mayors; nor, in the State House, the proclamations of Governors, with their failing virtue, — failing them at critical moments — that the coming generations will study what really befell; but in the plain lessons of Theodore Parker in this Music Hall, in Faneuil Hall, or in Legislative Committee Rooms, the true temper and authentic record of these days will be read. The next generation will care little for the chances of elections that govern governors now; it will care little for fine gentlemen who behaved shabbily, but it will read very intelligently in his rough story, fortified with exact anecdotes, precise with names and dates, what part was taken by each actor; who threw himself into the cause of humanity, and who came to the rescue of civilization at a hard pinch, and who blocked its course.

The vice charged against America, is the want of sincerity in leading men. It does not lie at his door. He never kept back the truth, for fear to make an enemy. But, on the other hand, it was complained that he was bitter and harsh, that his zeal burned with too hot a flame. It is so difficult, in evil times, to escape this charge! For the faithful preacher most of all. It was his merit, like Luther, Knox, and Latimer, and John Baptist, to speak tart truth, when that was peremptory, and when there were few to say it. But his sympathy for goodness was not less energetic. One fault he had, — he over-estimated his friends, — I may well say it, and sometimes vexed them with the importunity of his good opinion, whilst they knew better the ebb which follows exaggerated praise. He was capable, it must be said, of the most unmeasured eulogies on those he esteemed, es-



pecially if he had any jealousy that they did not stand with the Boston public as highly as they ought. His commanding merit as a reformer is this, that he insisted beyond all men in pulpits, — I cannot think of one rival, — that the essence of Christianity is its practical morals ; it is there for use, or it is nothing ; and if you combine it with sharp trading, or with ordinary city ambitions to gloss over municipal corruptions, or private intemperance, or successful fraud, or immoral politics, or unjust wars, or the cheating of Indians, or the robbery of frontier nations, or leaving your principles at home to show on the high seas or in Europe a supple complaisance to tyrants, — it is a hypocrisy, and the truth is not in you ; and no love of religious music or of dreams of Swedenborg, or praise of John Wesley, or of Jeremy Taylor, can save you from the Satan which you are.

His ministry fell on a political crisis also ; on the years when Southern slavery broke over its old banks, made new and vast pretensions, and wrung from the weakness or treachery of Northern people fatal concessions in the Fugitive Slave Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Two days, bitter in the memory of Boston, the days of the rendition of Sims and of Burns, made the occasion of his most remarkable discourses. He kept nothing back. In terrible earnest he denounced the public crime, and meted out to every official, high and low, his due portion. By the incessant power of his statement, he made and held a party. It was his great service to freedom. He took away the reproach of silent consent that would otherwise have lain against the indignant minority, by uttering in the hour and place wherein these outrages were done the stern protest.

But whilst I praise this frank speaker, I have no wish to accuse the silence of others. There are men of good powers who have so much sympathy, that they must be silent when they are not in sympathy. If you don't agree with them,

they know they only injure the truth by speaking. Their faculties will not play them true, and they do not wish to squeak and gibber, and so they shut their mouths. I can readily forgive this, only not the other, the false tongue which makes the worse appear the better cause. There were, of course, multitudes to censure and defame this truth-speaker. But the brave know the brave. Fops, whether in drawing-rooms or churches, will utter the fop's opinion, and faintly hope for the salvation of his soul; but his manly enemies, who despised the fops, honored him; and it is well known that his great hospitable heart was the sanctuary to which every soul conscious of an earnest opinion came for sympathy — alike the brave slaveholder and the brave slave-rescuer. These met in the house of this honest man — for every sound heart loves a responsible person, one who does not in generous company say generous things, and in mean company base things, but says one thing, — now cheerfully, now indignantly, — but always because he must, and because he sees, that, whether he speak or refrain from speech, this is said over him; and history, nature, and all souls testify to the same.

Ah, my brave brother! it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense, and your place cannot be supplied. But you will already be consoled in the transfer of your genius, knowing well that the nature of the world will affirm to all men, in all times, that which for twenty-five years you valiantly spoke; that the winds of Italy murmur the same truth over your grave; the winds of America over these bereaved streets; that the sea which bore your mourners home affirms it, the stars in their courses, and the inspirations of youth; whilst the polished and pleasant traitors to human rights, with perverted learning and disgraced graces, rot and are forgotten with their double tongue saying all that is sordid for the corruption of man.

The sudden and singular eminence of Mr. Parker, the importance of his name and influence, are the verdict of his country to his virtues. We have few such men to lose; amiable and blameless at home, feared abroad as the standard-bearer of liberty, taking all the duties he could grasp, and more, refusing to spare himself, he has gone down in early glory to his grave, to be a living and enlarging power, wherever learning, wit, honest valor, and independence are honored.

## ORIGINAL ODE.

BY FRANKLIN B. SANBORN.

FAIR summer glides with face serene,  
 Along the quickening earth to-day;  
 In murmuring woods and pastures green  
 The thrush and sparrow carol gay.

But ours must be the song of wo,  
 And tears and wintry gloom are ours,  
 For one brave heart that lies below  
 The tender grass and laughing flowers.

Across the melancholy wave  
 Our constant thought flies swiftly there,  
 And lingers hovering round his grave,  
 Amid the fragrant Tuscan air.

O, rest in peace! from labors rest!  
 Too long thy blest release we weep;  
 Thy body sleeps in Earth's kind breast,  
 Its loftier way thy soul doth keep.

With us, with us thy memory dwells,  
 Forbids despair, and hushes strife,—  
 Here most, where every echo tells  
 The story of thy noble life.

Yet what can check our sorrow here?  
 Or who more justly weep than we,  
 While Love and Reverence force the tear,  
 And Truth and Freedom mourn for thee?

## REMARKS BY WENDELL PHILLIPS.

The lesson of this desk is Truth! That your brave teacher dared to speak, and no more. It is only two or three times in our lives that we pause in telling the whole merit of a friend, from fear of being thought flatterers. What the world thinks easily done, it believes; all beyond is put down to fiction. I find myself hesitating to speak just all I think of THEODORE PARKER, lest those who did not know him should suppose I flatter, and thus I mar the massive simplicity of his fame.

Born on the 24th of August, 1810, he died just before finishing his fiftieth year. He said to me, years ago, "When I am fifty, I will leave the pulpit, and finish the great works I have planned." God ordered it so! He has left this desk, and gone there to finish the great works that he planned! Some speak of his death as early; but he died in good old age, if we judge him by his work, — full of labors, if not of years, — a long life crowded into few years; as Bacon says, "Old in hours, for he lost no time." Truly, he lost not an hour, from the early years when, in his sweet, plain phrase, he tells us "his father let the baby pick up chips, drive the cows to pasture, and carry *nubs* of corn to the oxen" — far on to the closing moment when, faint and dying, he sent us his blessing and brave counsel last November, dated fitly from ROME. God granted him life long enough to see of the labor of his hands. He planted broadly, and lived to gather a rich, ripe harvest. His life, too, was an harmonious whole, —



——— “when brought

Among the tasks of real life, he wrought,  
Upon the plan that pleased his childish thought.”

The very last page those busy fingers ever wrote, tells the child's story, than which, he says, “no event in my life has made so deep and lasting an impression on me.” “A little boy in petticoats, in my fourth year, my father sent me from the field home.” A spotted tortoise, in shallow water, at the foot of a rhodora, caught his sight, and he lifted his stick to strike it, when “a voice within said, ‘it is wrong.’ I stood with lifted stick, in wonder at the new emotion, till rhodora and tortoise vanished from my sight. I hastened home, and asked my mother what it was that told me it was wrong. Wiping a tear with her apron, and taking me in her arms, she said, ‘Some men call it conscience ; but I prefer to call it the voice of God in the soul of man. If you listen to it and obey it, then it will speak clearer and clearer, and always guide you right. But if you turn a deaf ear or disobey, then it will fade out, little by little, and leave you in the dark and without a guide.’ ”

Out of that tearful mother's arms grew your pulpit. Here in words — every day in the streets, by deeds, during a hard life, he repeated and obeyed her counsel.

Of that pulpit, its theology, and its treatment by Unitarian divines, manly and Christian lips spoke to us two weeks ago. It is not for me, even if there were need, to touch on it. Born in that faith, and nurtured in similar maxims of the utmost liberty, and the duty of individual investigation and thought, I used it to enter other paths. Mine is the old faith of New England. On those points he and I rarely talked. What he thought, I hardly know. For myself, standing beneath the Gospel rule of “judging men by their fruits,” I should have felt stronger in defending my own

faith, could I have pointed to any preacher of it who as gently judged and as truly loved his fellow men. As to doctrines, we both knew that "the whole of truth can never do harm to the whole of virtue;" that, of course, a man's conception of truth is only his opinion, and not, necessarily, absolute truth. But it is always safe and wise for honest and earnest men to seek for truth everywhere and at all hazards. The results, if not wholly and only good, are yet the best things within our reach.

The lesson of Theodore Parker's preaching was love. Let me read for you a sonnet still among his papers :

Oh, Brother ! who for us didst meekly wear  
 The Crown of Thorns about thy radiant brow ;  
 What Gospel from the Father didst thou bear,  
 Our hearts to cheer, making us happy now ?  
 'Tis this alone, the immortal Saviour cries, \*  
 To fill thy heart with ever-active love ;  
 Love for the wicked as in sin he lies,  
 Love for thy Brother here, thy God above ;  
 Fear nothing ill, 't will finish in its day,  
 Live for the Good, taking the ill thou must ;  
 Toil with thy might, with manly labor pray,  
 Living and loving learn thy God to trust,  
 And He will shed upon thy soul the blessings of the just.

Standing in the old ways, I cannot but suspect these Unitarian pulpits of some latent and cowardly distrust of their own creed, when I see that if one comes from them to our Orthodox ranks, and believes a great deal more than they do, he is treated with reverend respect ; but let him go out on the other side, and believe a very little less, and the whole startled body join in begging the world not to think them naturally the parents of such horrible and dangerous heresy !

But there is one thing every man may say of this pulpit.

It was a live reality, and no sham. Whether tearing theological idols to pieces at West Roxbury, or here, battling with the every-day evils of the streets, it was ever a live voice, and no mechanical or parrot tune: ever fresh from the heart of God, as these flowers, these lilies — the last flower over which, when eyesight failed him, with his old gesture, he passed his loving hand and said, “how sweet!” As in that story he loved so much to tell, of Michael Angelo, when in the Roman palace Raphael was drawing his figures too small, Angelo sketched a colossal head of fit proportions, and taught Raphael his fault, — so Parker criticized these other pulpits, not so much by censure as by creation; by a pulpit proportioned to the hour, broad as humanity, frank as truth, stern as justice, and loving as Christ.

Here is the place to judge him. In St. Paul’s Cathedral, the epitaph says, if you would know the genius of Christopher Wren, “look around.” Do you ask proof how full were the hands, how large the heart, how many-sided the brain of your teacher — listen, and you will hear it in the glad, triumphant certainty of your enemies, that you must close these doors since his place can never be filled! Do you ask proof of his efficient labor and the good soil into which that seed fell — gladden your eyes by looking back and seeing for how many months the impulse his vigorous hand gave you has sufficed, spite of boding prophecy, to keep these doors open! Yes, he has left those accustomed to use weapons, and not merely to hold up *his* hands. And not only among yourselves. From another city, I received a letter, full of deep feeling, and the writer, an orthodox church-member, says —

“I was a convert to Theodore Parker before I was a convert to ——. If there is any thing of value in the work I am doing to-day, it may, in an important sense, be said to have had its root in Parker’s heresy. I mean the habit,

without which orthodoxy stands emasculated and good for nothing, of independently passing on the empty and rotten pretensions of churches and churchmen, which I learned earliest and more than from any other from Theodore Parker. He has my love, my respect, my admiration."

Yes, his diocese is broader than Massachusetts. His influence extends very far outside these walls. Every pulpit in Boston is freer and more real to-day because of the existence of this. The fan of his example scattered the chaff of a hundred sapless years. Our whole city is fresher to-day because of him. The most sickly and timid soul under yonder steeple, hide-bound in days and forms and beggarly Jewish elements, little dreams how ten times worse and narrower it was before this sun warmed the general atmosphere around. As was said of Burke's unsuccessful impeachment of Warren Hastings, "never was the great object of punishment, the prevention of crime, more completely obtained. Hastings was acquitted, but *tyranny and injustice were condemned* wherever English was spoken." So we may say of Boston and Theodore Parker. Grant that few adopted his extreme theological views — that not many sympathized in his politics; still, that Boston is nobler, purer, braver, more loving, more Christian to-day, is due more to him than to all the pulpits that vex her Sabbath air. He raised the level of sermons intellectually and morally. Other preachers were compelled to grow in manly thought and Christian morals in very self-defence. The droning routine of dead metaphysics or dainty morals was gone. As Christ preached of the fall of the tower of Siloam the week before, and what men said of it in the streets of Jerusalem, so Parker rung through our startled city the news of some fresh crime against humanity — some slave hunt, or wicked court, or prostituted official — till frightened audiences actually took bond of their new clergymen that they should not be tormented before their time!



Men say he erred on that great question of our age — the place due to the Bible. Perhaps so. But William Crafts, one of the bravest men who ever fled from our vulture to Victoria, writes to a friend: "When the slave-hunters were on our track, and no other minister, except yourself, came to direct our attention to the God of the oppressed, Mr. Parker came with his wise counsel, and told us where and how to go; gave us money — but that was not all — he gave me a weapon to protect our liberties, and a Bible to guide our souls. I have that Bible now, and shall ever prize it most highly."

How direct and frank his style — just level to the nation's ear. No man ever needed to read any one of his sentences twice to catch its meaning. None suspected that he thought other than he said, or more than he confessed.

Like all such men, he grew daily — never too old to learn. Mark how closer to actual life, how much bolder in reform, are all his later sermons — especially since he came to the city — every year a step

———"forward, persevering to the last,  
From well to better, daily self-surpassed."

There are men whom we measure by their times — content and expecting to find them subdued to what they work in. They are the chameleons of circumstance; they are Eolian harps, toned by the breeze that sweeps over them. There are others, who serve as guide-posts and land-marks — we measure their times by them. Such was Theodore Parker. Hereafter the critic will use him as a mete-wand, to measure the heart and civilization of Boston. Like the Englishman, a year or two ago, who suspected our great historian could not move in the best circles of the city, when it dropped out that he did not know Theodore Parker, distant men gauge us by our toleration and recognition of him.

Such men are our Nilometers ; the harvest of the future is according to the height that the flood of our love rises round them. Who cares now that Harvard vouchsafed him no honors ! But history will save the fact to measure the calculating and prudent bigotry of our times.

Some speak of him only as a bitter critic and harsh prophet. Pulpits and journals shelter their plain speech in mentioning him under the example of what they call his "unsparing candor." Do they feel that the *strangeness* of their speech, their unusual frankness, needs apology and example ! But he was far other than a bitter critic ; though thank God for every drop of that bitterness that came like a wholesome rebuke on the dead, saltless sea of American life ! Thank God for every indignant protest, for every Christian admonition that the Holy Spirit breathed through those manly lips ! But if he deserved any single word, it was "generous." *Vir generosus* is the description that leaps to the lip of every scholar. He was generous of money. Born on a New England farm, in those days when small incomes made every dollar a matter of importance, he no sooner had command of wealth than he lived with open hands. Not even the darling ambition of a great library ever tempted him to close his ear to need. Go to Venice or Vienna, to Frankfort or to Paris, and ask the refugees who have gone back, — when here friendless exiles but for him, — under whose roof they felt most at home ! One of our oldest and best teachers writes me, that telling him once, in the cars, of a young lad of rare mathematical genius, who could read Laplace, but whom narrow means debarred from the University — "Let him enter," said Theodore Parker ; "I will pay his bills."

No sect, no special study, no one idea bounded his sympathy ; but he was generous in judgment, where a common man would have found it hard to be so. Though he does

not "go down to dust without his fame," though Oxford and Germany sent him messages of sympathy, still, no word of approbation from the old grand names of our land, no honors from University or learned Academy, greeted his brave, diligent, earnest life ; men can confess that they voted against his admission to scientific bodies for his ideas, feeling all the while that his brain could furnish half the Academy ; and yet, thus ostracized, he was the most generous, more than just, interpreter of the motives of those about him, and looked on while others reaped where he sowed, with most generous joy in their success. Patiently analyzing character and masterly in marshalling facts, he stamped with generous justice the world's final judgment of Webster, and now that the soreness of the battle is over, friend and foe allow it.

He was generous of labor, — books never served to excuse him from any, — the humblest work. Though "hiving wisdom with each studious year," and passionately devoted to his desk, as truly as was said of Milton, "The lowliest duties on himself he laid." What drudgery of the street did that scholarly hand ever refuse ? Who so often and constant as he in the trenches, when a slave case made our city a camp ? Loving books, he had no jot of a scholar's indolence or timidity, but joined hands with labor everywhere. Erasmus would have found him good company, and Melancthon got brave help over a Greek manuscript ; but the likeliest place to have found him in that age would have been at Zwingle's side, on the battle-field, pierced with a score of fanatic spears. For, above all things, he was terribly in earnest. If I sought to paint him in one word, I should say he was always *in earnest*.

I spoke once of his diligence, and we call him tireless, unflagging, unresting. But they are common-place words, and poorly describe him. What we usually call diligence in educated men does not outdo, does not equal the day-laborer

in ceaselessness of toil. No scholar, not even the busiest, but loiters out from his weary books, and feels shamed by the hodman or the plough-boy. The society and amusements of easy life eat up and beguile one half our time. Those on whose lips and motions hang crowds of busy idlers, submit to life-long discipline, almost every hour a lesson. Those on whose tones float the most precious truth, disdain an effort. The table you write on is the fruit of more toilsome and thorough discipline than the brain of most who deem themselves scholars ever knew. Let us not cheat ourselves with words. But no poor and greedy mechanic, no farm tenant "on shares" ever distanced this unresting brain. He brought into his study that conscientious, loving industry which six generations had handed down to him on the hard soil of Massachusetts. He *loved* work, and I doubt if any workman in our empire equalled him in thoroughness of preparation. Before he wrote his review of Prescott, he went conscientiously through all the printed histories of that period in three or four tongues. Before he ventured to paint for you the portrait of John Quincy Adams, he read every line Adams ever printed, and all the attacks upon him that could be found in public or private collections.

Fortunate man! he lived long enough to see the eyes of the whole nation turned toward him as to a trusted teacher. Fortunate, indeed, in a life so noble, that even what was scorned from the pulpit, will surely become oracular from the tomb! Thrice fortunate, if he loved fame and future influence, that the leaves which bear his thoughts to posterity are not freighted with words penned by sickly ambition or wrung from hunger,—but with earnest thoughts on dangers that make the ground tremble under our feet, and the heavens black over our head,—the only literature sure to live. Ambition says, "I will write, and be famous." It is only a dainty tournament, a sham fight, forgotten when the



smoke clears away. Real books are like Yorktown or Waterloo, whose cannon shook continents at a moment, and echo down the centuries. Through such channels Parker poured his thoughts.

And true hearts leaped to his side. No man's brain ever made him warmer friends; no man's heart ever held them firmer. He loved to speak of how many hands he had, in every city, in every land, ready to work for him. With royal serenity he levied on all. Vassal hearts multiplied the great chief's powers. And at home the gentlest and deepest love, saintly, unequalled devotion, made every hour sunny, held off every care, and left him double liberty to work. God comfort that widowed heart!

Judge him by his friends. No man suffered anywhere, who did not feel sure of his sympathy. In sick chambers, and by the side of suffering humanity, he kept his heart soft and young. No man lifted a hand anywhere for truth and right, who did not look on Theodore Parker as his fellow-laborer. When men hoped for the future, this desk was one stone on which they planted their feet. Where, more frequent than around his board, would you find men familiar with Europe's dungeons and the mobs of our own streets? Wherever the fugitive slave might worship, here was his Gibraltar. Over his mantel, however scantily furnished, in this city or elsewhere, you were sure to find a picture of Parker.

But he is gone! So certain was he of his death, that in the still watches of the Italian night, he comforted the sickening hopes of those about him by whispering —

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
Which says I must not stay;  
I see a hand you cannot see,  
Which beckons me away."

But where shall we stop? This empty desk! You may fill it, but, *where* is he who called it into being? Who shall make *no* so emphatically the symbol of free thought? To *men* stood here was, for most men, sufficient credentials. Here the young knight earned his spurs. Around it has swelled and tossed the battle of Christian liberty. The debate, whether Theodore Parker should speak in one place or preach in another, has been one of God's chief methods of teaching this land the lesson of what bigots style *toleration*, and freemen better call Christian liberty.

He has passed on — we linger. That other world grows more real to us, as friend after friend enters it. Soon more are there than on this side; soon our hearts are more than half there. God tenderly sunders the few ties that still bind us. So live that when called to join that other assembly, we shall feel we are only passing from an apprenticeship of thought and toil to broader fields and a higher teacher above.

The blessings of the poor are his laurels. Say that his words won doubt and murmur to trust in a loving God — let that be his record! Say that to the hated and friendless, he was shield and buckler — let that be his epitaph! The glory of children is the fathers. When you voted "that Theodore Parker should be heard in Boston," God honored you. Well have you kept that pledge. In much labor and with many sacrifices he has laid the corner-stone. His work is ended here. God calls you to put on the top-stone. Let fearless lips and Christian lives be his monument!

#### HYMN 327.

My God, I thank Thee! may no thought  
 E'er deem Thy chastisements severe;  
 But may this heart, by sorrow taught,  
 Calm each wild wish, each idle fear.

Thy mercy bids all nature bloom ;  
 The sun shines bright, and man is gay ;  
 Thine equal mercy spreads the gloom  
 That darkens o'er his little day.

Full many a throb of grief and pain  
 Thy frail and erring child must know ;  
 But not one prayer is breathed in vain,  
 Nor does one tear unheeded flow.

Thy various messengers employ ;  
 Thy purposes of love fulfil ;  
 And 'mid the wreck of human joy,  
 Let kneeling faith adore Thy will.

The exercises were concluded with a benediction pronounced by Rev. Mr. Russell.

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The following letter was received from Mr. Wasson, and would have been read had not the length of the exercises prevented :—

#### LETTER FROM D. A. WASSON.

Not only ages, but entire civilizations may pass, before another man shall arise, just so gifted and equipped as him whom we commemorate to-day. It is not so much that his powers were rare in kind, though they were surely rare—very rare in degree ; but his distinction is that he combined in himself qualities, which commonly go to the making of a large number of men, and are considered incompatible ; and, as oxygen and carbon in their chemical union make flame, and hydrogen and oxygen produce water, though in their separate accumulation the former are cold and the latter dry, so qualities and powers which separately would have made only a multitude of strong men, in their vital union produced that brand of the Lord, that Missouri of manhood,

whom we remember as Theodore Parker. Winckelmann, in his work on Greek art, shows that the finest forms were achieved by an admirable blending into one of the characteristics of man and woman; and I think that in great excellence everywhere there is a conjunction of natural opposites. So was it with our hero. He was in spirit a union of Cato the Censor, and some sweetest Sister of Charity; he was both Freya, the gentle and prophetic, and Thor with the thunder hammer. So while his learning and reading were so vast that the entire faculty of a college could have been well fitted out from his single brain, on the other hand, he could teach common sense to mechanics, homely simplicity of speech to draymen, and sympathy with the every-day interests of mankind to all. He was more a recluse student than any merest scholar; and he inhabited a wider out-of-doors than sea-captains. He had such trust in God and such sureness of the future,—or rather a thousand times more than such—as those have who “wait God’s time;” while yet he toiled as though the weight of the world rested upon his shoulders alone, and as if no plant of blessing should spring up for the future whose seed was not sown out of his own heart. It is often said that he was chiefly a destroyer. That is not true. He joined opposites here as elsewhere. He indeed pulled down with power, but also with power and assiduity he built up. He spurned the false; but it was for love of the true. He lopped away with an unsparing hand the foolish or hidden excrescences of theological speculation; but so much and more did he enlarge and affirm the simple elements, the universal truths, of faith and morals. But I misstate—I said that he pulled down;—this, however, is not so. To cleanse the Augean stables is not to destroy them. To push away ruin and corruption is no work of destruction. He *swept*, indeed, the house of Faith, intolerant of the abominations which profaned it; but at the same time, and with no less industrious hand, he strength-



ened and buttressed its walls. He was a reverent man,—profoundly religious and reverent. True, he did not split hairs about the Trinity; he did not maunder of the Logos; he did not prate of the Fathers; he was not tender toward superstitions that slander God; and did not earn a cheap reputation for a reverent habit so; but that man is reverent who bows before the attributes of God, and who can honor all men, be they white or black; that man is reverent to whom justice is commanding and goodness adorable; and of whom could this be affirmed more than of Theodore Parker?

He was a rare learner, humble, docile, intent; a perpetual child at the text-book of Nature, constantly correcting himself, never ashamed to confess a mistake; yet he had pre-eminently the spirit and genius of a teacher,—methodical, clear, positive, endlessly varying his statements, and never, by a hundred or a thousand repetitions of his cardinal facts and doctrines, wearying either himself or his hearers.

So self-respecting he was that he forgot not the rights of his manhood even in the most awed moment of his adoration—so humble that there was no hind, no idiot, to whom his heart beat not with equal love as a brother. He was capable of a mighty wrath, but it was born of his love, and never expended upon account of his private wrongs; he was angry and sinned not, for it was the anger of the prophet; indignation at wrongs done to humanity; a grand, a noble, a sacred passion. Treachery to truth, to justice, to mercy, to God and man—this it was, and this alone, that flushed his brow. A blow at himself he never in his life returned; but the wretch, especially the great, the powerful, the prosperous wretch, who came to stab at the heart of humanity, him he confronted, and in no trivial mood! He was the war-horse of God—he was the Cœur de Lion of conscience and common sense—he was a sanctified Titan—he was THEODORE PARKER!

## PROCEEDINGS

OF

### THE NEW ENGLAND ANTI-SLAVERY CONVENTION.

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AT the session of the New England Anti-Slavery Convention, on Thursday afternoon, May 31, the following Resolutions were offered by Wendell Phillips:—

*Resolved*, That in the death of our beloved friend and fellow-laborer, Theodore Parker, liberty, justice, and truth lose one of their ablest and foremost champions — one whose tireless industry, whose learning, the broadest, most thorough and profound New England knows, whose masterly intellect, melted into a brave and fervent heart, earned for him the widest and most abiding influence; in the service of truth and right, lavish of means, prodigal of labor, fearless in utterance; the most Christian minister at God's altar in all our Commonwealth, one of the few whose fidelity saves the name of the ministry from being justly a reproach and byword with religious and thinking men; a kind, true heart, full of womanly tenderness—the object of the most unscrupulous even of bigot and priestly hate, yet on whose garments bitter and watchful malice found no stain — laying on the altar the fruits of the most unresting toil, yet ever ready as the idlest to man any post of daily and humble duty at any moment:—in him we lose that strong sense, deep feeling and love of right for whose eloquent voice millions waited in every hour of dark-

ness and peril, whose last word came, fitly, across the water a salutation and a blessing to the kindred martyrs of Harper's Ferry : — the store-house of the lore of every language and age, the armory of a score of weapons sacred to right, the leader whose voice was the bond of a mighty host, the friend ever sincere, loyal, and vigilant, a man whose fidelity was attested equally by the trust of those who loved him, and the hate of every thing selfish, heartless, and base in the land ; in time to come the slave will miss keenly that voice always heard in his behalf, and which a nation was learning to heed — and whoever anywhere lifts a hand for any victim of wrong and sin, will be lonelier and weaker for the death we mourn to-day.

*Resolved*, That a copy of the above resolution be sent to Mrs. Parker, with fit expression of our most sincere and respectful sympathy in this hour of her bitter grief and sad bereavement.

## REMARKS BY REV. JOHN T. SARGENT,

### PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION.

I can only say, for myself, that, perhaps, I have no right to a single moment of the precious time, so wisely assigned to other speakers ; but this let me say, as the presiding officer of this Convention, that under no auspices, perhaps, could this fitting tribute be more suitably and profitably offered, than under those of the New England Anti-Slavery Convention ; and, were the tribute to be commensurate with the worth of our dear friend, it might better be said, under the auspices of the United States Anti-Slavery Convention, or the wide world's Anti-Slavery Convention. For who more than he has been the fearless champion of human rights ?

This, as was said yesterday, of all places in this city of his professional labors, is the fitting place for our tribute; for you remember it was here that he first planted the standard of freedom of speech and the freedom of the pulpit, which he so manfully and nobly sustained to the hour of his death. I am sure there are many here present who well remember the stormy day, the memorable sixteenth of February, 1845, when we met here his few and fondly-attached followers, and here inaugurated that freedom which he so bravely carried out.

But, as I said when I began, I have no right — though my heart is full enough, Heaven knows — to encroach upon the time which has been assigned to other and abler speakers. You are to hear, this afternoon, from Wendell Phillips, and others who knew and loved our friend — the friend of man.

#### REMARKS BY REV. SAMUEL J. MAY.

MR. PRESIDENT : — I shall not detain you or the Convention long with what I have to say. You are all expecting, and expecting justly, from the lips of him who has just read to you the resolutions, a speech which will be more worthy of them and of the occasion than any thing that I can offer. But I deem it a privilege as well as a duty first to press upon you — if, indeed, they need to be pressed — those resolutions, expressive of the sorrow which every one who had aught to do with this or any other attempted reforms in our country must feel, when they think of the departure of those who have been so true, so faithful, so fearless. I look back, Mr. President, with a sad heart upon the past, when I remember not only these two faithful ones, but others who have fallen, ere yet the great work to which we put our hands, a few years ago, seems to be half accomplished. When I first



heard our brother Garrison state and advocate the great principles on which the redemption of the enslaved in our country was to be attempted, they seemed to me so self-evidently true, they were so impressive, that I had not a doubt of their almost immediate acceptance when they should be made known. So simple was I in that day of Anti-Slavery infancy! In 1840, a dear friend, my step-mother, died. She had ever, however, I am sorry to say, been opposed to my espousal of the Anti-Slavery cause; for though excellent in other respects, she was constitutionally conservative. I refer to her now, that I may mention a fact which I had forgotten for some time. Among her papers was one dated about ten years before the time when I found it, on which was recorded this simple prediction of mine:—"Our son, S. J. May, says that, in ten years from this time, the Anti-Slavery cause must be triumphant." That was in 1840. How little did I foresee the trials to which this self-evident truth was to be subjected, ere it would be accepted by the people! Never shall I forget the joy of my heart when our friends, Phillips and Quincy, came forth, with all their academic honors upon them, and all their professional prospects before them, and laid themselves, and all they were and had, upon the altar of devotion to the slave. It seemed to me the harbinger of almost immediate triumph to our cause. But we toiled on, year after year, and still the mighty Bastile stood, apparently as firm as ever. Then came the men who are alluded to in these resolutions. And more especially Theodore Parker, of whom all that is here set forth may be said, and more, if language could be found to express it. A truer, purer, simpler, more devout, devoted, fearless, loving man, have I never known. And yet, what have his labors, and all the labors of brother Browne, and of all who have come into this cause, effected? The nation is indeed aroused; the nation can never slumber again over this mighty wrong;—that

is true. The day of triumph must come, for there is a God, and there is a spark of Divinity in every human heart, else man would not be man. And yet, who is confident enough to prophesy when the hour is to be? But let us not be discouraged. In grateful memory of these devoted friends, in grateful memory of the services rendered us by that man, especially, whose memory is to live, and whose fame is to spread wider and wider, and whose loving and burning words are to be listened to by an ever enlarging audience throughout every part of those lands which speak our language — aye, and all other lands in which there is any thing like free thought — in grateful remembrance of his services, and as the best testimony we can give him of our gratitude and love, let us now, with renewed devotion, consecrate ourselves all the more to this great service, in the solemn resolution that, crippled as we are by his removal from our midst, yet, trusting in that God whom he so nobly vindicated from the aspersions that a false theology has thrown upon him, and to the power of that truth which possesses, in itself, an influence which the stoutest, the most malignant, cannot forever withstand — let us, I say, resolve that, crippled as we are, we will nevertheless go on with increased determination, fighting this monster-wrong to its death.

#### REMARKS BY WENDELL PHILLIPS.

Another friend is gone. Not gone! No, with us, only standing on one step higher than he did. To such spirits, there is no death. In the old times, when men fought with spears, the warrior hurled his weapon into the thickest of the opposite host, and struggled bravely on, until he stood over it and reclaimed it. In the bloom of his youth, Theodore Parker flung his heart forward at the feet of the Eternal ;

he has only struggled onward, and reached it to-day. Only one step higher!

“Wail ye may full well for Scotland,  
Let none dare to mourn for him.”

How shall we group his qualities? The first that occurs to me is the tireless industry of that unresting brain, which never seemed to need leisure. When some engagement brought me home in the small hours of the morning, many and many a time have I looked out (my own window commands those of his study), and seen that unquenched light burning — that unflagging student ever at work. Half curious, half ashamed, I lay down, saying with the Athenian, “The trophies of Miltiades will not let me sleep.” He seemed to rebuke me even by the light that flashed from the window of his study. I have met him on the cars deep in some strange tongue, or hiving up knowledge to protect the weak and hated of his own city. Neither on the journey nor at home did his spirit need to rest.

Why is he dead? Because he took up the burden of three men. A faithful pulpit is enough for one man. He filled it until the fulness of his ideas overflowed into other channels. It was not enough. His diocese extended to the prairies. On every night of the week, those brave lips smothered bigotry, conquered prejudice, and melted true hearts into his own on the banks of the Mississippi. This was enough for two men. But he said, “I will bring to this altar of Reform a costlier offering yet;” and he gathered the sheaf of all literature into his bosom, and came with another man’s work, almost all the thoughts of all ages and all tongues, as the background of his influence in behalf of the slave. He said, “Let no superficial scholarship presume to arraign Reform as arrogant and empty fanaticism. I will overtop your candidates with language and law, and show you, in all

tongues, by arguments hoar with antiquity, the rightfulness and inevitable necessity of justice and liberty." Enough work for three men to do; and he sunk under the burden.

Lord Bacon says, "Studies teach not their own use; that comes from a wisdom without them and above them." The fault of New England scholarship is that it knows not its own use; that, as Bacon says, "it settles in its fixed ways, and does not seek reformation." The praise of this scholar is, that, like the great master of English philosophy, he was content to light his torch at every man's candle. He was not ashamed to learn. When he started in the pulpit, he came a Unitarian, with the blessings of Cambridge. Men say he is a Unitarian no longer; but the manna, when it was kept two days, bred maggots, and the little worms that run about on the surface of corruption call themselves the children and representatives of Channing. They are only the worms of the manna, and the pulpit of Federal Street found its child at the Music Hall. God's lineage is not of blood. Brewster of Plymouth, if he stood here to-day, would not be in the Orthodox Church, counting on his anxious fingers the five points of Calvin. No; he would be shouldering a Sharpe's rifle in Kansas; fighting against the libels of the *Independent* and *Observer*; preaching treason in Virginia, and hung on an American gibbet;—for the child of Puritanism is not mere Calvinism; it is the loyalty to justice which tramples under foot the wicked laws of its own epoch. So Unitarianism (so far as it has any worth) is not standing in the same pulpit, or muttering the same shibboleth; it is, like Channing, looking into the face of a national sin, and, with lips touched like Isaiah's, finding it impossible not to launch at it the thunderbolt of God's rebuke.

Old Lyman Beecher said, "If you want to find the successor of St. Paul, seek him where you find the same objec-



tions made to a preacher that were made to St. Paul." Who won the hatred of the merchant princes of Boston? Who did State street call a madman? The fanatic of Federal street in 1837. Who, with unerring instinct, did that same herd of merchant princes hate, with instinctive certainty that, in order that their craft should be safe, they ought to hate him? The Apostle of Music Hall. That is enough.

When some Americans die — when most Americans die — their friends tire the public with excuses. They confess this spot, they explain that stain, they plead circumstances as the half justification of that mistake, and they beg of us to remember that nothing but good is to be spoken of the dead. We need no such mantle for that green grave under the sky of Florence. No excuses — no explanations — no spot. Priestly malice has scanned every inch of his garment; — it was seamless; it could find no stain. History, as in the case of every other of her beloved children, gathers into her bosom the arrows which malice had shot at him, and says to posterity, "Behold the title-deeds of your gratitude!" We ask no moment to excuse, there is nothing to explain. What the snarling journal thought bold, what the selfish politician feared as his ruin — it was God's seal set upon his apostleship. The little libel glanced across him like a rocket when it goes over the vault; it is passed, and the royal sun shines out as beneficent as ever.

When I returned from New York on the thirteenth day of this month, I was to have been honored by standing in his desk, but illness prevented my fulfilling the appointment. It was eleven o'clock in the morning. As he sank away the same week, under the fair sky of Italy, he said to the most loving of wives and of nurses, "Let me be buried where I fall;" and tenderly, thoughtfully, she selected four

o'clock of the same Sunday to mingle his dust with the kindred dust of brave, classic Italy.

Four o'clock! The same sun that looked upon the half-dozen mourners that he permitted to follow him to the grave, that same moment of brightness lighted up the arches of his own Temple, as one whom he loved stepped into his own desk, and with remarkable coincidence, for the only time during his absence, opened one of his own sermons to supply my place; and as his friend read the Beatitudes over his grave on the banks of the Arno, his dearer friend here read from a manuscript the text, "Have faith in God." It is said that, in his last hours, in the wandering of that masterly brain, he murmured, "There are two Theodore Parkers; one rests here, dying, but the other lives, and is at work at home." How true! at that very moment, he was speaking to his usual thousands; at that very instant, his own words were sinking down into the hearts of those that loved him best, and bidding them, in this, the loneliest hour of their bereavement, "Have faith in God."

He always came to this platform. He is an old occupant of it. He never made an apology for coming to it. I remember many years ago, going home from the very hall which formerly occupied this place. He had sat where you sit, in the seats, looking up to us. It had been a stormy, hard gathering — a close fight; the press calumniating us; every journal in Boston ridiculing the idea which we were endeavoring to spread. As I passed down the stairs homeward, he put his arm within mine, and said, "You shall never need to ask me again to share that platform." It was the instinct of his nature, true as the bravest heart. The spot for him was where the battle was hottest. He had come, as half the clergy come — a critic. He felt it was not his place; that it was to grapple with the tiger,

and throttle him. And the pledge that he made he kept; for, whether here or in New York, as his reputation grew, when that lordly mammoth of the press, the *Tribune*, overgrown in its independence and strength, would not condescend to record a word that Mr. Garrison or I could utter, but bent low before the most thorough scholarship of New England, and was glad to win its way to the confidence of the West by being his mouthpiece — with that weapon of influence in his right hand, he always placed himself at our side, and in the midst of us, in the capital State of the Empire.

You may not think this great praise — we do. Other men have brought us brave hearts, other men have brought us keen-sighted and vigilant intellects, but he brought us, as no one else could, the loftiest stature of New England culture. He brought us a disciplined intellect, whose statement was evidence, and whose affirmation the most gifted student took long time before he ventured to doubt or to contradict. When we had nothing but our characters, nothing but our reputation for accuracy, for our weapons, the man who could give to the cause of the slave that weapon, was indeed one of its ablest and foremost champions.

Lord Bacon said in his will, "I leave my name and memory to foreign lands, and to my own countrymen, *after some time be passed.*" No more fitting words could be chosen, if the modesty of the friend who has just gone before us would have permitted him to adopt them for himself. To-day, even within twenty-four hours, I have seen symptoms of that repentance which Johnson describes :

"When nations, slowly wise and meanly just,  
To buried merit raise the tardy bust."

The men who held their garments aside, and desired to have no contact with Music Hall, are beginning to show symptoms

that they will be glad, when the world doubts whether they have any life left, to say, "Did not Theodore Parker spring from our bosom?" Yes, he takes his place — his serene place — among those few to whom Americans point as a proof that the national heart is still healthy and alive. Most of our statesmen, most of our politicians, go down into their graves, and we cover them up with apologies; we walk with reverent and filial love backward, and throw the mantle over their defects, and say, "Remember the temptation and the time!" Now and then one — now and then one — goes up silently, and yet not unannounced, like the stars at their coming, and takes its place, while all eyes follow it and say, "Thank God! It is the promise and the herald! It is the nation alive at its heart. God has not left us without a witness, for his children have been among us, and one half have known them by love, and one half have known them by hate — equal attestations to the divine life that has passed through our streets."

I wish I could say any thing worthy; but he should have done for us, with the words that never failed to be fitting, with that heart which was always ready, with that eloquence which you never waited for and were disappointed — he should have done for us what we vainly try to do for him. Farewell, brave, strong friend and helper!

"Sleep in peace with kindred ashes  
Of the noble and the true;  
Hands that never failed their country,  
Hearts that baseness never knew!"

#### REMARKS BY WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

Mr. Garrison said he felt impelled to utter a few unpremeditated words in support of the resolutions offered by



Mr. Phillips, respecting the removal of his beloved and endeared friend, THEODORE PARKER; and yet, when all hearts were full, almost to bursting, in view of this great bereavement, the most eloquent words seemed poor and common-place. Silence was more expressive than speech.

His estimate of Mr. Parker was an exalted one. He regarded him as one of the most remarkable men the world had ever seen—a prodigy as to his scholarly attainments, and his power to acquire knowledge in all its varied forms, which he dispensed with unbounded munificence for the enlightenment and elevation of his race. He felt very sad at his departure, which he regarded as premature, the result of overtaking his bodily powers, though for the noblest ends. He thought his friend, Mr. Phillips, needed to be admonished, rather than stimulated to more protracted labors, by that light which he so often saw in Mr. Parker's study, at the sacrifice of needed rest. It was not an example to be imitated, for it was using up life too rapidly, in violation of physiological law. How often—even before he saw any sign of failing health on the part of Mr. Parker—had he warned him, with all earnestness, that, by such unremitted studies and labors, he was surely “treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath!” But he was wont playfully, yet confidently, to refer to the longevity of his ancestors as full security in his own case. His (Mr. G.'s) reply was, “I do not doubt that your great-grandfather, and grandfather, and father, were amply endowed with brains; but they never used them as you are tasking yours; and you must be more careful, or the penalty will come.” Nevertheless, if Mr. Parker had fallen thus prematurely, it was a rich consolation to know that it was the result of earnest devotion to the cause of truth, freedom, and humanity, and a very noble sacrifice indeed.

Mr. Garrison referred to the mental independence and

moral courage which characterized Mr. Parker in respect to all his convictions and acts. He was not, technically, "a Garrisonian Abolitionist," though often upon that platform, but voted with the Republican party, though faithfully rebuking it for its timidity and growing spirit of compromise. He was no man's man, and no man's follower, but acted for himself, bravely, conscientiously, and according to his best judgment.

But, what of his theology? Mr. Garrison did not know that he could state the whole of Mr. Parker's creed, but he remembered a part of it:—There is one God and Father over all, absolute and immutable, whose love is infinite, and therefore inexhaustible, and whose tender mercies are over all the works of his hand; and whether in the body, or out of the body, the farthest wanderer from the fold might yet have hope. He believed in the continual progress and final redemption of the human race; that every child of God, however erring, would ultimately be brought back. "You may quarrel with that theology," said Mr. Garrison, "if you please; I shall not. I like it; I have great faith in it; I accept it. But this I say, in respect to mere abstract theological opinions—the longer I live, the less do I care about them, the less do I make them a test of character. It is nothing to me that any man calls himself a Methodist, or Baptist, or Unitarian, or Universalist. These sectarian shibboleths are easily taken upon the lip, especially when the 'offence of the Cross' has ceased. Whoever will, with his theology, grind out the best grist for our common humanity, is the best theologian for me."

Many years ago, Thomas Jefferson uttered a sentiment which shocked our eminently *Christian* country as being thoroughly infidel: "I do not care," said he, "whether my neighbor believes in one God or in twenty gods, if he does not pick my pocket,"—thus going to the root of absolute

justice and morality, and obviously meaning this: If a man pick my pocket, it is in vain he tells me, in palliation of his crime, "I am a believer in one living and true God." That may be, but you are a pickpocket, nevertheless. Or he may say, "I have not only one God, but twenty gods; therefore, I am not guilty." Nay, but you are a thief! And so we always throw ourselves back upon character—upon the fact whether a man is honest, just, long-suffering, merciful; and not whether he believes in a denominational creed, or is a strict observer of rites and ceremonies. This was the religion of Theodore Parker,—always exerting his marvellous powers to promote the common good, to bless those who needed a blessing, and to seek and to save the lost, to bear testimony in favor of the right, in the face of an ungodly age, and against "a frowning world."

Mr. Garrison said they were there to honor his memory. How could they best show their estimation of him? By trying to be like him in nobility of soul, in moral heroism, in fidelity to the truth, in disinterested regard for the welfare of others.

Mr. Parker, though strong in his convictions, was no dogmatist, and assumed no robes of infallibility. No man was more docile in regard to being taught, even by the lowliest. Mr. Phillips had done him no more than justice when he said, that he was willing and eager to obtain instruction from any quarter. Hence, he was always inquiring of those with whom he came in contact, so that he might learn, if possible, something from them that might aid him in the great work in which he was engaged.

When the question of Woman's Rights first came up for discussion, like multitudes of others, Mr. Parker was inclined to treat it facetiously, and supposed it could be put aside with a smile. Still, it was his disposition to hear and to learn; and as soon as he began to investigate, and to see

the grandeur and world-wide importance of the Woman's Rights movement, he gave to it his hearty support before the country and the world.

How he will be missed by those noble but unfortunate exiles who come to Boston from the old world, from time to time, driven out by the edicts of European despotism! What a home was Theodore Parker's for them! How they loved to gather around him in that home, and what a sympathizing friend, and trusty adviser, and generous assistant, in their times of sore distress, they have found in him! There are many such in Boston, and in various parts of our country, who have fled from foreign oppression, who will hear of his death with great sorrow of heart, and drop grateful tears to his memory.

Mr. President, our beloved friend and coadjutor has seen "the last of earth." We never shall behold his face again in the flesh. We shall never again hear the music of his voice, nor be inspired by his bodily presence. But is he dead? Are his great powers and faculties paralyzed? Is he now in inglorious rest? Or is he not, rather, more than ever before, alive, and beneficently at work? Is it a dream, a fiction of the brain, to believe that he really lives, and occupies a nobler and wider sphere, and that he will find a nobler and grander work to perform than he has been able to do here? I believe in immortal life, — not as a matter of logic or of metaphysics, for it does not come within the scope of these, — but I feel it in every fibre and nerve of my system, in every drop of my blood, in the very instinct, necessities, and desires of my nature.

"The soul, secure in her existence, smiles  
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point."

This thought, in view of any mortal bereavement, how-



ever great, fills the soul with complete satisfaction, and inspires it with a new life.

“ God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly  
 What He hath given ;  
 They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly  
 As in His heaven.”

Our departed friend has left with us, and with mankind, his great thoughts and noble deeds, and they are imperishable. They have touched and quickened millions of minds already, and shall enlighten and inspire millions yet unborn ; and so, going down through the ages, they shall be a power to redeem mankind.

As for his reputation, so bitterly assailed and maliciously traduced while he lived, time will render it more and more illustrious. As for the stigmas cast upon him by narrow-minded bigots, and canting hypocrites, and craven time-servers, and cold-blooded conservatives, these are to give place to the plaudits of a discerning and an appreciating posterity. Thus it is that they who are willing to bear the cross are permitted in God's good time, to wear the crown !

“ For truth doth conquer at the last ;  
 So round and round we run ;  
 And ever the right comes uppermost,  
 And ever is justice done !”

#### REMARKS BY REV. JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

When I was asked if I also would say something here, I felt as our friend Wendell Phillips felt, and as our friend Mr. Garrison also felt, that this was not a time in which we could speak words which should analyze or describe the

character of the man whose loss was filling our hearts with a sense of inexpressible grief; but, having heard them speak, some thoughts have come to me which I would like to utter.

We all have a feeling that Theodore Parker was the ripe and precious fruit of our New England soil, of our New England stock, of our New England mind, of our New England institutions. A better specimen of a full-grown, manly and womanly New England mind, heart and hand, has never ripened on these old gray rocks of Yankee land. How was he great? There are three directions in which a man may be great, and he was great in all three. There is the direction of the intellect. There are great thinkers; there are men who make themselves into a thinking machine; there are men who make themselves into a studying machine—who fill themselves full of all thoughts and all knowledges, and stop there. Theodore Parker had all the power of study that any of the hardest and ripest German students, who live for nothing but study, have had; but he had a great deal more. When he came back from his first journey to Europe, talking with me of the men whom he had seen in Germany, he said he went to see old Baur at Tübingen, and asked him how many hours he studied. He replied "Only eighteen hours;" but Baur was a student, and nothing but a student. Parker had studied his ten, twelve, and, for aught I know, his eighteen hours a day; but yet, all that was merely the beginning of what he was going to do with himself—merely the outside preparation for his after work. I remember meeting him on the cars on that fatal winter which laid the foundation of the disease which took him away. He had a carpet-bag with him, filled with German, Greek, and Latin books,—those old books, in vellum, of the seventeenth century,—volumes which it is a pain merely to look at, so hard reading do they seem to be. On

Monday morning, he filled his carpet-bag, and went to the place where he was to lecture Monday night; all day long he studied his books, and at night delivered his lecture. Then on Tuesday he would go to the next place, studying his books all day, and lecturing at night. So he would go on through the week, until Friday, when he would be back again to Boston, with his carpet-bag exhausted, with every one of those books gutted of its contents, with the whole substance of them in his brain, so that he knew all about every one of them, and could give a perfect analysis of them all, from beginning to end. On Saturday morning he would sit down to write his sermon for the next day; on Saturday afternoon go and visit the sick and bereaved of his society; on Sunday morning preach his sermon, and in the afternoon drive out to Watertown and preach there; and on Sunday evening he would lie on the sofa, and talk to his friends. That was his way of working. I got a letter, only yesterday, from William H. Channing, an old friend of his, who, speaking in the most tender and affectionate terms of his departure, said that he had, by over-working the intellectual part of his faculties, by too great fidelity in study, killed out, to some extent, another masterly faculty, which he had observed, but of which those who did not know him might be ignorant — namely, his gorgeous imagination. Mr. Channing said that he was a man who had, with all his logical power, with all those reflective faculties, with all those immense powers of grasp and reception, — the powers by which he held on to and retained what he had learned, and the powers by which he brought them into one great system, in order to set them before men, — with all this, he had the imagination of a poet, but did not let it work, he was so busy studying all the time.

Now, there were other students along with him when he was a boy, and I have known a great many students, but

their way of studying was very different from his. When Parker studied, it was not merely with the concentration of certain faculties, for the sake of working out a certain problem, and there an end of it; or merely to gather together certain things and put them into his brain, and there an end of it. No; he had a great idea before him all the time, and his study was always instinct with the life of that idea, and every word he uttered was a living word, and all the thoughts that came from him, came from him as fresh, glowing thoughts, — full of love to God and love to man.

Not to dwell on that, I say he was great, very great, intellectually, because he was not a narrow intellectual worker, but because he worked with the great reasoning faculty, which goes up to God the Eternal, at the same time that he worked with all those other intellectual powers which gathered together what God has sown broadcast over the earth, and by which he matured them for ripe and present use. When I saw him, on his return from Europe the last time, he told me of a long conversation which he had with a scholar at Oxford, I think, or Cambridge, who had lived for nothing but to study Aristotle; that was his business in the world — to know all about Aristotle; and Parker said that he discussed with him, through a whole summer day, Aristotle. When they had exhausted that subject, Parker asked him if he knew any thing about Plato. He said, "I have read Plato once;" and then Parker began upon Plato, and went through with every one of the dialogues, and taught him all he did not know about Plato. This is but a little part of Parker's knowledge, of which not one in ten thousand ever heard; and it is a specimen of the quantity and kind of knowledge which he had packed away ready for use.

Now, with regard to the second thing which goes to make a man great. What was Parker's way of action? It was a grand way of action. His activity was as large, deter-



mined, persistent, complete, and thorough as his intellectual working was. What he did was on a plan reaching through years—on a plan arranged when he was a boy; the whole of his life mapped out before him, with all he meant to do each year previously arranged, and the reason for it fixed in his own mind; and then he went to his work and did it—lived to accomplish it. But what sort of work was it? Greatness in work considers the quality of the work as well as the amount and method of accomplishing it. What was the quality of his work? It was simply this: it was to lift man toward God. That was the work which Parker gave himself to do in the world. That was the work for which he gathered together all this knowledge, that the work for which he so trained his intellect to be acute, persistent, and comprehensive. It was to raise men to God. With his eye on God, he turned to man to lift him up; and wherever he found a man who needed to be raised, or a class, a race, or a nation, that needed to be lifted up, there he felt his work to be. On that point I say no more, because it is the least necessary to speak of his work, since that is patent and known to all.

But there is one other element of greatness in man. Besides the head and the hand, there is the heart. What was the greatness of heart in Theodore Parker? His habit was in speaking of the Almighty, not to call Him the Almighty. He spoke of the "Absolute Father," in his philosophy and in his theology; but when he came to speak of Him from the pulpit, as a Christian man speaking to Christian men, as a brother talking to brethren and sisters of what they needed, it was "Father" and "Mother"—"the Great Father and Mother of us all." The tender, feminine heart of Theodore Parker was not satisfied with the name of "Father," unless he united with it that of "Mother." So tender was he, so affectionate was he, that no one was ever

near to Parker as a friend, as an intimate companion, without wondering how it was that men could ever think of him as hard, stern, severe, cold, and domineering, because, in all the private relations of life, he was as docile as a child to the touch of love, and it was only necessary, if you had any fault to find with any thing that he had said or done, to go to him and tell him just what your complaint was, or what your difficulty was, and just as likely as not he would at once admit, if there was the least reason in the complaint, that he was wrong. He was as ready to admit himself in the wrong as to maintain his stand for the everlasting right.

When Theodore Parker was about going away, and I went to see him for the last time, he followed me to the door of his study, and, putting his hands on my shoulders, he kissed my cheek, and said, "James, if you and I never meet again in this world, we have the happiness of knowing that there never has been between us one word, or one feeling, or one action, of unkindness." In the Old World, you will see men who carry in their button holes a red ribbon — the sign that they belong to the Legion of Honor. As long as I live, I shall carry (not apparent to others, but known to myself) the mark of that tender, fraternal kiss on my cheek. It is to me the sign of belonging to the Legion of Honor.

I do not know how to describe — with what figure borrowed from nature, or art, or history to describe — how Parker seems to me, in all this varied and accumulated greatness of mind, of heart, and of hand, better than by telling you the incidents of one day of my life. When I was passing out of Italy once, by the St. Gothard route, we were in Italy in the morning, on the Italian side of the mountains, surrounded by Italian voices, and by the music of Italian nightingales, and within sight of the opening vineyards. Then we began the ascent of the mountain, and as we ascended, we passed through the valley of pines, until at last,

on that fifteenth day of May, we came to the snow. Then we took the little sleds, and went on upon the snow, higher and higher, until we were surrounded with great fields of snow, dazzling white in the sun; and on one side we saw the fall of a terrible avalanche, with its roar of thunder. So we passed on, until we reached the summit of the mountain, and then, descending on the other side, we came at last to where again the snow ceased, and there taking the diligence, we went on our way down the side of the mountain, through gorges and ravines, and glaciers even, the country around growing more and more green, changing from spring to summer, until at last, when we came down toward the Lake of Lucerne, we passed through orchards full of apple-blossoms, and finally crossed the beautiful lake to the town of Lucerne, there to receive a whole bundle of letters from home — from father, mother, brother, sister, and child — to end the day. When I think of that day's journey, beginning in Italy and ending in Germany, beginning under an Italian sun, at midday surrounded by snow-fields and glaciers, and at its close amid the apple-blossoms of Germany, it seems to me that that varied and wonderful day is a sort of type of the life of our friend THEODORE PARKER; its youth Italian — all fresh and gushing with ten thousand springs of early, boyish life and hope and animation, and with all the varied study and activity of the child and youth; its early morning passed in the stern work of climbing up the mountain side; its midday, with God's everlasting sun over his head, and the great, broad fields all around, over which his eye looked; and all through its afternoon hours, passing on into an ever-increasing affluence of spring and summer, and ending at last in the sweet bosom of affection, gratitude, and love.

How shall we miss him! The days are to come when we shall know how we miss him. When that great Hall stands

closed and silent on the Lord's day, — empty and silent, because there is no one here who has the commanding ability which can bring together those great multitudes Sunday after Sunday, month after month, and year after year, to be taught and fed, — when great crises of the nation come, and pass unexamined, and not understood, because that great masterly power of analysis is taken from us, — when great national crimes are repeated again and again, and not rebuked to the listening ear of the nation, because there is no great power of intellect and knowledge adequate to that work — then we shall remember and feel and mourn the loss of THEODORE PARKER.



## RESOLUTIONS OF THE FRATERNITY.

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AT a meeting of the Fraternity, June 1, the following Resolutions were offered, and after remarks by several members, were unanimously adopted:—

WHEREAS, this Fraternity is composed of members of the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, and one of its objects, as declared in the Constitution, is to assist the Minister and Standing Committee of that Society in all suitable ways, and as the Reverend Theodore Parker was our minister up to the time of his decease,—of us to the last, though not with us,—therefore

*Resolved*, That we desire to express our deep sense of the loss we have sustained by his death, and our appreciation of the lasting obligation under which we rest for the great service he has done us, and to show, as far as in us lies, a becoming respect and veneration for his memory.

*Resolved*, That in the death of Theodore Parker we mourn the loss of one who has been to us a minister indeed, faithful to every delegated trust, discharging all the functions of his office with a generous disregard of self, and a conscientious care for the welfare of his flock, which entitle him to our warmest admiration and gratitude; a teacher who taught us the highest truths at which he had arrived, however unpopular with the mass of men, and who never hesitated to utter what duty impelled him to speak, however painful the utterance may have been to him, or hurtful to the prejudices of others, thus seeking to warn us of all that was base and unmanly, to guide us in the way of virtue and toward every human excellence, never appealing to a low

motive, but ever to what was highest and best in our nature ; a friend who never, by reason of his superior gifts or attainments, set himself above those less favored, but treated all men and women as equals, who was as a brother to the humblest of men, the protector of the weak and helpless, the advocate of the rights of the oppressed, and who in his dealings with the unfortunate and degraded of every class, showed a manly sympathy and a womanly delicacy and tenderness ; a man whose integrity never failed, whose pure life and noble character furnish a lofty model which the humblest of us may well aspire to imitate, though none of us perhaps may hope to attain.

*Resolved*, That while we gratefully and lovingly cherish the memory of our minister, and guide, and friend, we will do all in our power, individually and as a society, to disseminate still more widely the generous sentiments and great ideas of which he was the representative, and which he spent his life in promulgating ; and so carry forward the good work in which he labored so long, so faithfully, and with such success.

*Resolved*, That a copy of the foregoing resolutions be forwarded to Mrs. Parker.

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## RESOLUTIONS

OF

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY.

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At the close of the regular services at the Music Hall, on the 3d of June, on which occasion an eloquent sermon, illustrative of the character of Theodore Parker, was preached by his well-beloved friend, Rev. Samuel J. May, of Syracuse,

a meeting of the society was held in view of the loss of their minister. Charles W. Slack, Chairman of the Standing Committee, presided, and in calling the meeting to order, stated that it was for the purpose of taking some suitable cognizance of the great loss they had sustained.

Mr. Frank T. Sanborn, of Concord, then offered the following resolutions, before reading which he said they had been drawn with special reference to Mr. Parker's connection with the society as its minister, which office he had always regarded as far the most important of his life.

*Resolved*, That we have received, with the most profound sorrow, the tidings of the death of our beloved minister and friend, Theodore Parker; who, by his long absence from our pulpit, as well as by his constant presence in it for so many years, has caused us to feel the strong and peculiar tie which joined us to him in the sacred relation of minister and parishioner.

*Resolved*, That although the union between him and ourselves has been too closely knit by a common belief in the great truths of religion, by common hopes, sentiments, and aspirations, and by long participation in religious and benevolent action, ever to be dissolved by distance or death; although we still recognize him as our minister, even though we see his face no more, we must nevertheless realize to-day how greatly we are weakened and saddened by this event, which breaks beyond hope of reunion the long-established and familiar intercourse of preacher and hearer, of pastor and people, and which removes forever from our mortal sight the friend who loved us so well that he laid down his life in our service, and for the cause in which we have enlisted with him.

*Resolved*, That we owe and offer to the good God whom it was his highest ambition to glorify and serve, our fervent thanks for the precious privilege which was our own for so

many years, and which we have only learned to value the more by its loss, of listening to his teachings; of strengthening ourselves by his example; of drawing consolation and hope from his affectionate ministrations on occasions of public and private grief, and of looking to him in all those countless offices which the true minister performs for the people of his charge, not as formal duties, but as a grateful and holy service.

*Resolved*, That we will endeavor to testify by our lives (as he has taught us) to the good work wrought in us by the faith we profess, esteeming that the best honor to his memory, no less than the highest service of the loving Father to whom he has so long offered our united prayers.

*Resolved*, That we invite all former members of our Society, and all those, wherever they may dwell, who have looked up with us to Theodore Parker as their guide in spiritual things, to join with us in these expressions of our sorrow as members of one household of faith, and partakers in a common loss.

*Resolved*, That we tender our sincere thanks to those friends of our minister, who cared for him in his last illness and performed those sad and pleasing obsequies in a foreign land, which we, in the unsearchable providence of God, were not permitted to take part in here.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to our dear friend, the wife of our beloved minister, and to the other members of his family, thereby assuring them of what they cannot doubt, our earnest sympathy in their bereavement, which is even greater than ours.

After remarks by several members of the society, the resolutions were unanimously adopted.



A Look at the Life of Theodore Parker :

A

# DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

## THEODORE PARKER

DELIVERED IN THE INDIANA-PLACE CHAPEL,

JUNE 3, 1860.

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BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

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## DISCOURSE.

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Matt. xi. 7-9: "WHAT WENT YE OUT INTO THE WILDERNESS TO SEE? A REED SHAKEN BY THE WIND? BUT WHAT WENT YE OUT FOR TO SEE? A MAN CLOTHED IN SOFT RAIMENT?—BEHOLD, THEY THAT WEAR SOFT CLOTHING ARE IN KINGS' HOUSES. BUT WHAT WENT YE OUT FOR TO SEE? A PROPHET? YEA, I SAY UNTO YOU, AND MORE THAN A PROPHET."

WE have, during the last week, heard of the death of Theodore Parker,—a noble and worthy soul, known well, honored and loved by most of us. I cannot let this day pass by without taking occasion to say a few words, however incomplete and inadequate, in memory of his worth. And, in speaking of him, I hope to avoid all extravagance of eulogy, all indiscriminate praise, all sweeping generalities of statement. As he to others, so I to him. He once refused to accept the established rule of necrology, *De mortuis nil nisi bonum*,—"Say nothing but *good* of the dead;" and substituted for it this other and better rule, *De mortuis nil nisi verum*,—"Say nothing but *truth* of the dead."—"It is no merit," added he, "to die. Why praise a man because he is dead?" I will remember this honesty, brother, in speaking of thee.

THEODORE PARKER was the ripe fruit of New England; baptized in the Lexington Meeting-house; learning his letters in the primary school; taking strength from the granite and gravel below, and from the cold winter winds above; learning freedom of utterance at town-meeting;

inheriting strong sense, clear logic, and penetrating insight, in his ancestral blood; of the stock of the Puritans; of the tribe of Massachusetts; a Yankee of the Yankees; a Unitarian also, by inheritance from plain-thinking parents; and as touching all youthful habits of behavior, all moral requisitions of a strict community, blameless. No man more than he, since Benjamin Franklin, has shown those traits of common sense, joined with abstract speculation; sensibility of conscience, poised with calm judgment; the fanatic's devotion to ideas, with the calculating prudence of a man of the world; which make the basis of New-England character and its essential strength.

When, on the 19th of April, 1775, the British troops marched to Lexington and Concord, they found at Lexington the militia company of that town—eighty strong—drawn up on the green, in front of the Meeting-house, to receive them. The captain of the company waited till the British troops—eight hundred in all—had reached the green and deployed into line opposite, and till their commander had ordered the Americans to disperse. Then he, too; gave the same order to his men; not wishing to sacrifice life in a useless resistance to overwhelming numbers, but letting the British soldiers, for the first time, look in the face of the American militia. But, while they were dispersing, the British fired; and that greensward, on the April morning, was stained with the first American blood which fell in the great struggle. Out in Kentucky, the hunters heard it, and baptized their newly planted town by the name of Lexington. In Europe, the nations heard it, and dated from that hour the beginning of a new era for the destinies of man. The captain of that militia company was John Parker, grandfather of our Theodore; and his gun was kept by Theodore in his study, to be used, if necessary, in protecting the fugitive slave under his roof against the Regulars and Tories of our day, who are ready



as ever to trample on the rights of the individual, in the supposed interest of order and of good government.

Born thus, amid New-England life, in a farmer's home; driving the cows to the field, and going to the district school; listening to sermons, and to discussions in town-meeting; studying his Latin grammar by the light of the kitchen fire; hardening his body and soul with stern manual labor, and training his intellect by the wholesome studies of the common schools,—the genius of *Theodore Parker* took its flight upward, from its humble nest in the meadow-grass to its singing-place among the stars. It is an honor to our institutions when they train up their boys into such men as he.

Was he a great man? Let us examine that point. There is a double danger here of error; danger of not noticing the greatness close to us, because it is so near,—as people walking at the foot of Antwerp Minster cannot measure the height of its spire; and danger of exaggerating, in our enthusiasm, qualities of a merely transient splendor into a permanent radiance,—as the bright light in a window near by may be mistaken for a distant star. What, then, makes true greatness? and did he possess it?

There is no real greatness where we do not find in a man the three elemental tendencies of Intellect, Affection, and Will,—all in full and harmonious activity. Either of them alone cannot constitute greatness. We see, among practical men, some of immense energy, who sweep every thing before them by their resistless will: but they are not *great* men; for their energy is not directed by any great thought, and not inspired by any generous love. And there are also men of great intellectual powers, but without any energetic purpose, any clear aim; whose knowledge tends nowhere. Like gold locked up in a miser's iron chest, their intellectual powers and treasures profit no one, and are useless. And so there may be love,—saintly love to God,

humane love to man; but because not illuminated by insight, nor directed by energetic purpose, it stagnates into a merely sentimental piety, a sentimental philanthropy.

I. Theodore Parker's INTELLECT was remarkable for its varied faculties. It was strong in analysis and synthesis, in marshalling a multitude of facts, and in ascending from facts to comprehensive laws. His memory of details was astonishing; but his power of systematizing those details — making them drill in companies, and march in squadrons, and take on the order of battle — was equally striking. His mind was strong in its perceptions and apprehensions; very able to seize and retain individual facts. In his childhood, he could repeat whole cantos of poetry, and learn by heart a poem of five hundred lines at a reading. Before he was ten years old, he had studied botany so as to know all the shrubs and trees of Massachusetts, and the names and habits of the plants in his vicinity. At ten, he began Latin; at eleven, Greek. At twenty-one, he had read Virgil twenty times, Horace nearly as often; besides having made himself master of chemistry, natural philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics. Presently he added French, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and German, and afterward Hebrew.\*

But the main character of his knowledge was that it was *live* knowledge. There are some men who accumulate facts as the ants gather grains. They are merely the collectors of dry seeds, which never germinate. They are the slaves of their knowledge, — not its masters. There are great scholars who never knew what to do with their accumulated stores. Not so with our friend. His mind was not like a forest in winter, when the trees stand close above and the bushes thick below, but where the icy

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\* See notice in the "Tribune" of May 29; written, doubtless, by Parker's old friend, George Ripley.

branches rattle together while the cold wind roars through their tops. It was like the same forest when the summer sun has poured life into every part, and the myriad buds and leaves expand: when the blossoms open, the birds and insects flit through the tender foliage, and a soft perfume comes mingled from a thousand thousand flowers.

Theodore Parker was possessed of a power of acquisition, which few men, out of Germany, ever had. He knew the contents of all the books in his library. He could take the substance out of a book in an incredibly short time. On that fatal winter which broke down his constitution and determined his fate (the winter which killed him), he was in the habit of filling a carpet-bag, not with novels, but with works of tough philosophy and theology, in Greek, Latin, German, in old black-letter print and yellow parchment covers; and would study them, Monday, while riding in the cars, to lecture on Monday night; study them, Tuesday, while riding to lecture at another place on Tuesday night; and so on, studying all day and lecturing every night, till Friday. On Friday he would come home, write his Sunday's sermon on Saturday forenoon, visit the sick and suffering of his society on Saturday afternoon, preach Sunday morning to two or three thousand people, rest a little on Sunday afternoon, receive his friends on Sunday evening, and away again on Monday.

I asked him, "Do you read all your books? and do you know what is in them?"—"I read them all," said he, "and can give you a table of contents for each book." During that winter, he lectured to about eighty thousand persons, in every part of the Free States, from Maine to Wisconsin.

When he came back from Germany, he had been to see the old theologian, Ferdinand Christian Baur of Tübingen; and he said he asked him how many hours a day he studied. The old man replied with a sigh, "Ach! leider, nur achtzehn,"—"Alas! only eighteen." Parker never studied eigh-

teen hours a day, I suppose ; but I think he put the twenty-four hours' study of common men into his six or twelve hours a day : for he who studies with an active mind will learn more in a few minutes, than another, studying passively and idly, will gain in an hour. What Parker knew, he knew ; and he knew that he knew it. All his knowledge lay at hand, accessible, like the tools of an orderly workman.

But the scholarship and knowledge of Theodore Parker made but the beginning of his intellectual work. He was an original thinker. Very early addicted to metaphysical pursuits, he never relinquished his taste for them. In philosophy, he belonged to that school of thinkers who are called Transcendentalists ; who believe that man, as God's child, receives an inheritance of ideas from within ; that he knows by insight ; that he has intuitions of truth, which furnish the highest evidence of the reality of the soul, of God, of duty, of immortality. He joined, not doubtfully, but with most earnest conviction, that great company of ideal philosophers, at whose head stands the divine Plato, and in whose generous ranks are the chiefest intellects of the race, — Socrates and Pythagoras, Epictetus and Antoninus, Plotinus and Jamblichus, Erigena and Anselm, Descartes and Leibnitz, Cudworth and Henry More, Pascal and Kant, Cousin and Schleiermacher. But his chief powers he consecrated to theology, which he justly regarded as the queen of all sciences. It has become the fashion with many, in these days, to undervalue both philosophy and theology, and to consider them as idle and empty studies, leading to no practical results ; while the arts and sciences, natural philosophy, the knowledge of external things, social questions, humanities, philanthropies, and reforms, are the only really solid and valuable studies. Not so thought Théodore Parker. He knew, as well as any, how empty is a great deal that is called theology ; but he also knew that every



man has, and must have, a philosophy and theology, true or false. He knew that every man's philosophy underlies his theology, and that his theology underlies all his practice. He knew that theological reform must precede all other reform; that as one thinks of God and God's character, so will he form his own. He knew that, while God is regarded as partial, wilful, and revengeful, man will continue to be partial, wilful, and revengeful too.

Until our theology becomes Christian, we can have no Christian morality nor Christian ethics. Those who believe that God has foreordained some human souls to an eternal hell hereafter, can very easily believe that he has ordained some human races to be slaves for ever here. Those who think that God is full of wrath against his enemies will consider it right themselves to be filled with wrath against theirs. Therefore Theodore Parker drove the deep subsoil plough of a sound theology under the roots of a false morality and ethics. And, when I say a sound theology, I refer especially to his doctrine of God,—to THEOLOGY, strictly so called; for his views here were mostly noble and admirable. His CHRISTOLOGY, or doctrine of Christ, I have thought defective; and his ANTHROPOLOGY, or doctrine of man, somewhat defective too, in important particulars. He ascribed too absolute moral power to the human will: he did not enough recognize the element of evil which comes to us from the solidarity of the race,—inherited from behind, and caught by contagion from around. He regarded sin as always and strictly a self-originated disease; never as a contagious epidemic, or as an inherited tendency. And all which to me seem his mistakes, theoretical and practical, had their root here.

There was also in the mind of Theodore a poetic quality to which he never did justice. Imagination is too spontaneous a faculty to thrive in a brain which is driven forward in the direction of constant work by so energetic a will.

In a letter just received from his friend William Henry Channing, he writes: "Once I remember telling him that his grand mistake was this concentrated unity of purpose. He was really richer in impulse, imagination, sympathy, and varied power, than he knew himself to be, or allowed himself to be."

## II. The second element of Greatness is ACTION.

The active element in Theodore Parker was very predominant. It went always abreast, at least, with the speculative. He studied and speculated in order to act. He was a worker in the world; here to do something, not merely to think something. Hence his interest in all reforms, in all social progress, in all which tends to deepen and heighten human culture. Before him, his life lay planned out like a chart; and his work was arranged year beforehand for every year. Indeed, his intense activity, as I just said, seemed often to weaken or repress his intellectual power; for thought needs a resting-time to ripen. Too constant action impairs the sweep and strength of the intellect. Especially is the imagination, that airy faculty, cramped by too energetic a will. It can only spread its wings when allowed perfect liberty and choice of its own time.

But what an amount of work did our brother do, with *tongue as a speaker*, with *pen as a writer*, with *hand as a helper*. First, as a PREACHER AND LECTURER, he stood unrivalled in the rare gift of making popular and interesting to thousands the results of systematic philosophy and theology. Before a crowd collected to be entertained by his wit, pointed comments, and sharp criticism, on the persons and things around them, he did not avoid an almost scholastic discussion of first principles; a careful analysis of conduct, character, morality; large generalizations, systematic and exhaustive distributions. Hour after hour, the great audience would listen; held by the

thread of a masterly and clear argument; enlivened indeed, not infrequently, by flashes of wit, and touches of poetic description. But, if he entertained and amused them, he did not have that for his end, but merely for one of his means. His end was to revolutionize public opinion; to beat down, by terrible blows of logic and satire, the cool defenders of inhuman wrong; to pour floods of fiery invective upon those who opposed themselves to the progress of a great cause; to fill all minds with a sense of responsibility to God for the use of all faculties; to show the needs of suffering man; to call attention to the degraded classes; to raise up those who were bowed down, and to break every yoke. He also came in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was ready to denounce the Ahabs and Herods of State Street, the hard money-kings of a commercial city, the false politicians whose lying tongue is always waiting to deceive the simple. His fiery indignation at wrong showed itself, in the most terrible invectives which modern literature knows, against the kidnappers, the proslavery politicians, the proslavery priests, and the slave-catching commissioners. These invectives were sometimes cruel and severe; in the spirit of Moses, David, and John the Baptist, rather than in that of Christ. Such extreme severity, whether in Jew or Christian, defeats its own object; for it is felt to be excessive and unjust. I cannot approve of Theodore Parker's severity. I consider it false, because extravagant; unjust, because indiscriminate; unchristian, because relentless and unsympathizing. But then I will remember how bitterly he was pursued by his opponents; how Christians offered prayers in their meetings, that he might be taken away; how Boston wealth and aristocracy hated and reviled him; how little he had, from any quarter, of common sympathy or common charity. I cannot wonder at his severity; but I cannot think it wise. Being so great, I wish he had been greater. Being so loving to

his friends, I wish he could also have felt less bitter scorn toward his opponents.

Together with his work as a preacher, he did a great work as lecturer and platform-speaker; and, in addition to this, another great work as writer. Book after book, pamphlet after pamphlet, issued from his busy brain and pen. I think, if anywhere, he failed intellectually here, — in a too great rapidity of production. His early writings are much more rich and full than his later ones. His "Discourse on Religion" — his first printed book — remains his best one. He did not give himself time to go down as deeply as he might, and to meditate as fully as he might, before he printed. But his writings were read by tens of thousands throughout America and Europe. Every one in the land knew him. To the furthest prairies of the West, to the remotest corner of England, his writings have penetrated. They were translated into different European languages. So he did, as Wendell Phillips said the other day, the full work of three men, — first as a preacher, then as a lecturer and platform-speaker, and last as a writer.

As a preacher, I have already spoke of him in the Music Hall to his own friends and hearers. It is not necessary to repeat here and now what I then said. I will only add, that though I thought, and still think, he was wanting, as a preacher, in the perception and utterance of some of the deepest truths of the gospel, I believe he did an immense good to thousands by his splendid utterances in behalf of right, justice, and good. He denounced wrong as no others denounced it; he appealed to the sense of responsibility as no others; he called upon the religious element in the soul to assert itself against all that is selfish, worldly, and sensual in man. Thousands were roused by him to see what life was for, — what only makes it really life. It is not necessary for every man to preach every part of the gospel, in order to do good. Having gifts differing accord-



ing to the grace given us, we are called, in preaching, to preach according to the proportion of our *own* faith.

When Paul preached to Felix, he did not think it necessary to say any thing about the doctrine of reconciliation by Christ. He preached "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" and "Felix trembled." No one can deny that Theodore Parker made many a Felix tremble by precisely the same sort of preaching; and I think that the Master will admit, that, though not doing all the work to be done in the vineyard, he faithfully and nobly did the work which God, by the sincere convictions of his soul, had given to him to do. "Care is taken," says Goethe, "that trees shall not grow up to heaven;" and God does not mean nor require that every man shall do every thing. He asks us only to be faithful to our own duty, which is determined by our own insight and conviction.

III. But head and hand alone, without heart, cannot make real greatness. There must be warm devotion to some person or to some cause, there must be affection, there must be love constantly pouring life into the intellect and will, else the intellect freezes into mere formality, and the will hardens into mere habit or dead routine.

Theodore Parker's soul was a loving soul. He was born with enthusiasm for the True, the Beautiful, and the Good; and the secret of his power over men was, that he was able to retain to the last this enthusiasm. They saw in him one man, who, though a great intellect, could yet love and adore; who, though a great practical worker, could feel tenderly all human woes and wrongs. Therefore they laid their hearts at his feet, and were willingly led by his genius and commanding thought.

He was a man of intense feeling; a man of tender sympathy; a man who felt as sincerely for the sufferings of a poor Irish laborer, or a poor drunkard, or a deserted child, as he did for the great cause of human progress. The

humblest never appealed to his sympathy in vain. How often have I heard of his interest in one or another unfortunate! — some exiled foreigners, some poor widows, some orphan children. His time, though so much utilized and so precious, was at the service of any forlorn vagabond and outcast; and I think that He who said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,” will prefer this practical obedience to his command, and sympathy with his spirit, to the most Orthodox confession which Theodore might have made of the Divinity of Christ, or of his miraculous power over nature.

The friends whom Parker loved, he loved with his whole heart. He loved them as Jonathan loved David: his love for them was wonderful, passing the love of woman. A word of kindness, an act of good-will, was never forgotten by him. His noble soul opened itself to affection like the blossoming apple-tree to the balmy sunshine in this early June. His sympathy with humanity inspired his flaming and ardent zeal for the oppressed everywhere; and as, in our land, the colored man is the most oppressed of all, therefore he felt most keenly *his* wrongs, and labored most zealously for *him*. Cold-hearted and selfish politicians, who think that to get office is the only motive in politics, could not understand this; but they are to be pitied for their forlorn ignorance of the nobilities of the human soul. His whole heart, as well as his whole reason and conscience, were in the cause of suffering and enslaved man; and for this that noble heart throbbed to the end.

This loving heart, which glowed with such devoted and steadfast affection for his friends, which burned with such ardent interest for the sufferers everywhere, could not be, and was not, wanting in the highest type of love. It rose through friendship to humanity, through humanity to piety. Having loved his brother whom he had seen, how could

he *not* love also the invisible but ever-present Father of us all? His piety was tender, filial, reverential; devout as that of Pascal, St. Bernard, or Madame Guyon. It was an instinct of adoration for infinite beauty and perfect love. Those who blamed his irreverent speech toward the outside of religion, toward the letter of the Bible, toward the sacraments of worship, little knew how tender and deep was his reverence towards the Great Father; whom he also loved to call the Mother,—Father and Mother of all men.

In looking for some illustration of this strangely exuberant and varied genius, I have recalled, as its best emblem, a day I once passed in crossing the St. Gothard Mountain, from Italy into Germany. In the morning, we were among Italian nightingales and the sweet melody of the Italian speech. The flowers were all in bloom, and the air balmy with summer perfumes from vine and myrtle. But, as we slowly climbed the mountain, we passed away from this,—first into vast forests of pine, and then out upon broad fields of snow, where winter avalanches were falling in thunder from above. And so, at noon, we reached the summit, and began to descend, till we again left the snow; and, for four hours, rode continually downward on a smooth highway, but through terrible ravines, over rushing torrents, into dark gorges, where the precipices almost met overhead, and the tormented river roared far below; and so on and on, hour after hour, till we came down into the green and sunny valleys of Canton Uri, and passed through meadows where men were mowing the hay, and the air was fragrant, not now with Southern vines, but with the Northern apple-blossoms. Here we heard all around us the language of Germany; and then we floated on the enchanting lake of the Four Cantons, and passed through its magnificent scenery, till we reached, at dark, the old city of Lucerne. This wonderful day, in its variety, is a type

to me of the career of our brother. His youth was full of ardor and hope, full of imagination and poetic dreams, full of studies in ancient and romanian lore. It was Italian and classic. Then came the struggling ascent of the mountain,—the patient toil and study of his early manhood; then the calm survey of the great fields of thought and knowledge, spreading widely around in their majestic repose, and of the holy heavens above his head,—the sublimities of religion, the pure mountain air of devout thought and philosophic insight; and then came the rapid progress, on and on, from this high summit of lonely speculation, down into the practice and use of life,—down among the philanthropies and humanities of being,—down from the solitary, serene air of lonely thought, through terrible ravines and broken precipices of struggling reform; by the roaring stream of progress, where the frozen avalanche of conservative opposition falls in thunder to crush the advancing traveller; and so, on and on, into the human homes of many-speaking men, among low cottages, along the road the human being travels, and by which blessing comes and goes,—the road which follows—

“The river’s course, the valley’s peaceful windings,  
Curves round the cornfield and the hill of vines;  
And so, secure, though late, reaches its end.”

Out of classic, Roman-Catholic, mediæval Italy into Protestant Germany; out of the land of organization and authority into the land of individual freedom; out of the historic South, inheriting all treasures of the past, into the enthusiastic, hopeful, progressive North, inspired with all the expectations of the future,—such was the course and progress of his earthly day. A long life, though closed at fifty years; as that day on the St. Gothard to us seemed already as long as three days, long before sundown.



And now, after this survey, I must conclude him to have been a really great man; because deficient in none of the elements which constitute greatness. A great intellect was in him directed by a great will toward an aim given by a great heart. The heart of love poured life into his thoughts and actions. His is a name to stand always high in the catalogue of New-England worthies; and, as long as Benjamin Franklin is remembered, Theodore Parker will not be forgotten. No monument will be erected to his memory at Mount Auburn or in State Street; at least, not in our day: but very probably the grandchildren of those who condemned him most bitterly may call on our grandchildren to subscribe for his statue, or to take tickets for the centennial celebration of his birthday.

I took for my text the saying of Jesus concerning John the Baptist; in which the Saviour seems to excuse the harshness and rudeness of his precursor, on the ground that such a work as he had to do required a man whose faults would lie in that direction. A civil and smooth-spoken gentleman, a man of decencies and proprieties, would not have drawn the multitudes into the wilderness to hear their sins denounced and their wickedness condemned. Nor would such an orator have gathered crowds into the Music Hall. Theodore was the John the Baptist of our day,—the prophet of a transition state, when the law had ended, but the gospel only just begun. He belonged to the period when the kingdom of God is taken by violence. He was not a reed shaken by the wind, nor a man clothed in soft raiment; but he was one of those whom the times require, and who could not do their work if essentially different from what they are. And as Jesus apologized for John, and excused his harshness, on the ground that such a character was required for such a

work; so I doubt not, that, if our brother failed in the same way, it was for the same reason: and I think that our Master will make for him the same excuse.

And now he has gone! That brain, filled with the last results and discoveries of the French, English, and German intellect, has gone! We can no more turn into Exeter Place to consult that encyclopædia. That great worker, who could swim steadily abreast of the rising tide of events, keeping always on its topmost wave, always having his word ready for the hour and for each event of the hour, has gone to sleep under the blue Tuscan sky. His dust mingles with that of the men of many ages,—with the Oscans and Latins, with the Tarquins and old Etruscan chiefs, with Roman consuls and Roman orators, with Carthaginian invaders from Africa, with Keltic invaders from Gaul, with Cimbri and Greek, with Ostrogoth and Lombard, with mediæval monks and doctors, with the dust of St. Francis, Dante, Michael Angelo, Petrarch, and Tasso. And, if he may not rest in Santa Croce with the illustrious dead of Florence; neither is Dante there, nor Savonarola. The kindred dust of the great Italian reformer was dispersed in flame on that Cathedral Square, near which our brother's remains repose. Let him sleep there after life's fevered task, our New-England cosmopolite, in that cosmopolitan society,—in that soil made up of the dust of men of all races, all creeds, and all characters. But we in Boston shall often miss him. When that great Hall shall stand silent and empty, Sunday after Sunday, because no one can be found in our community with ability to keep it filled with the crowds who went to hear him; when plausible pretenders and famous rhetoricians utter their applauded sophisms without contradiction, because our great critic is not here to answer them; when great national crises come and go unanalyzed, because he is not here with his ever-ready brain and well-filled memory

to give the immediate judgment which history is afterward to assign, — in such hours as these we shall remember the greatness and mourn the absence of our Boston Socrates, — of our gift of God, — our Theodore.

But such men can never wholly leave us. They go, and come again. All greatness lives, and must continue to live. It returns to us, made clearer to our memory than it was to our perception. So it will be with him. William Henry Channing, in the letter just received, says, —

“The news has just reached me of the death of Theodore Parker at Florence. How gloriously he fulfilled the end for which he was born! His name will be a bright and brightening one for many a generation. Easy enough it is, of course, for cavillers to note his excesses and shortcomings; but very difficult will it prove for honest observers to find many of his peers for intense sincerity, and brave faithfulness to conviction. I, at least, do not recall one of my friends, who, from first to last, has, with such unflagging constancy, been true to his highest aim. And how often, to those grieved by his severity and sharp sayings, I have said, ‘Do not be frightened back by the stone dogs and griffins at the gate: within is a rare garden!’ But he is free; gone, as dear Plato says, ‘to the good and perfect God, to be associated with better men than those we live with on earth;’ ascended, in the words of Marcus Aurelius, ‘to the clear ether, free from desires, disease, misfortune; there to see truth with open view; to live with the gods, and the children of the gods, above the highest summit of the heavens; to be ranked among the army of the gods, and to traverse the universe.’ The longer we exist as mortals here, the surer grows our confidence that earthly life is but an embryonic stage, and that death is the true birth into reality. God bless our risen brother!”

In this spirit we bid him farewell, endeavoring to be as faithful in our few things as he in his many things.

“Thou livest in the life of all good things :  
What words thou spak'st for freedom shall not die.  
Thou sleepest not ; for now thy love hath wings  
To soar where hence thy hope could hardly fly.

And often, from that other world, on this  
Some gleams from great souls gone before may shine,  
To shed on struggling hearts a clearer bliss,  
And clothe the right with lustre more divine.”



# A Tribute

TO

THE MEMORY AND SERVICES

OF THE

REV. THEODORE PARKER.

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From a Discourse

PRONOUNCED IN THE BULFINCH-STREET CHURCH,

BOSTON, JUNE 3, 1860.

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BY WILLIAM R. ALGER.

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## THE CHARACTER OF THEODORE PARKER.

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SINCE we were last here, friends, heavy news of loss and grief have come across the sea. The most marked and famous minister in America — a scholar, thinker, preacher, writer, reformer, pre-eminent, among all whom we have known, for richness of gifts, indefatigable energy, and a heroism that never quailed before the face of man — has yielded up his soul to God, far from his native land, and been laid to rest in foreign earth. In a future and more favorable age, when the clamor of detraction has ceased, and the hubbub of envious and hateful tongues has been silenced and forgotten, history will reckon this great man one of the most powerful and illustrious spirits of the century in which he lived; not inferior to many in native endowments, first among his fellows in cultured acquisitions, second to few on earth in his indomitable devotedness to truth and to humanity. Rarely do tidings reach us freighted with such solemn import as those which, although not unexpected, five days ago startled the country with the words, *Theodore Parker is dead!* That announcement has such a sorrowful interest for me, and such deep meaning for this community, that I cannot bear to let the occasion pass without at least a few broken words of tribute to the distinguished man who has gone from us, and the remarkable career that is now ended.

An individuality so bold and impetuous as that of Theodore Parker must often impinge against current prejudices, and awaken enmities. For twenty years he played so conspicuous a part in opposition to the views and passions of the conservative class and their followers, that there must needs be a multitude who regard his teaching with disfavor, and his person with dislike. Nevertheless, after all exceptions and abatements are made, he was a great and good man, a soul of extraordinary loftiness of dimensions, and filled to the very brim with those costly virtues, for want of whose inspiring power communities most languish and suffer. Furthermore, the grateful recollection gushes from my heart, that, in personal relations, I was long deeply indebted to his kind friendship. Hundreds of books has he freely loaned me from his princely library. Hundreds of times has he spoken friendly words of interest and encouragement to me; graciously uttering affectionate and precious words which many smaller and less busy men would not have thought it worth their while to stoop to say, — words which surely I shall cherish for ever in the holiest shrine of memory. And now that his course is finished, and his heart and lips are still and cold, far from his dear New England, if I should refrain to speak a grateful and admiring word for his memory, from fear of giving offence to some who were prejudiced against him, I should be afraid that my tongue would thenceforth cleave to the roof of my mouth; I should feel myself recreant to the sacredest duty that ever places its claim on the heart of man. And, in what I have to say, I shall not be careful to emphasize any faults or errors which may have belonged to him: that is an office impossible for me to discharge, standing with dimmed eyes beside his fresh grave. I shall leave it for his enemies. We may be sure they will do it thoroughly. Meanwhile, turn we to a more congenial duty.

Were Theodore Parker a man of merely conventional



greatness or distinction; belonged he to the class of men, who, successfully devoting themselves to their own aggrandizement, or to the support of established custom and prerogative, are honored by the applause of tyrants, aristocrats, and demagogues, the proud, the luxurious, and the selfish, — I should not be found speaking in his praise. It is the rareness and elevation of the spectacle displayed in him of original service and valor, of consistent self-denial and consecration, that constitute the preciousness of his example, — an intrinsic greatness and worth which demand the plaudits of every brave man who loves his fellows, and really believes in God.

“ An offering at the shrine of Power  
 Our hands shall never bring;  
 A garland on the car of Pomp  
 Our hands shall never fling;  
 Applauding in the conqueror's path  
 Our voices ne'er shall be:  
 But we have hearts to honor those  
 Who bid the world go free.

Praise to the good, the pure, the great,  
 Who make us what we are;  
 Who light the flame which yet shall glow  
 With radiance brighter far!  
 Glory to them in coming time,  
 And through eternity,  
 Who break the captive's galling chains,  
 And bid the world go free!”

This true servant of the people is to be honored for his gigantic industry. In a world of loiterers, flutterers, postponers, he toiled for distinctly chosen ends with a prompt and prodigious devotion productive of memorable results. The siren voices of indulgence, praise, or other temptation, vainly strove to seduce him from those herculean tasks of high design at which he applied himself with a tenacity and an ever-returning vigor that will hereafter

often be cited as a stimulating example. No business plodder or political aspirant worked so unremittingly to make money or to win office as he worked to accomplish the genuine aims of life, to edify his own soul, and to serve his fellows ; acquiring true joy ; mastering the records of history, the facts of science, and the principles of philosophy ; tuning his heart to harmony ; blessing society with the fruit of his achievements ; accumulating treasure in heaven. In direct opposition to a distinguished friend, I venture to say, that one of the greatest pieces of wisdom and good fortune which marked the career of Theodore Parker was his concentrated unity of purpose. Not frittering himself away in dissipated miscellaneousness of effort, but pouring himself in a cumulative course of foreseeing and single purpose, he will not evaporate like a shower of isolated exertions in the desert of contemporaneous notice, but roll as a voluminous river of influence across the plains of posthumous fame.

A still deeper tribute is due to his invincible loyalty to truth. He followed the lines of light wherever they led him. With unselfish courage, resisting every lure to falsehood or to compromise, he was a pupil, a defender, a propagandist of what he recognized as God's truth. Oh that there were in American pulpits ten thousand like him in this respect, free from all shackles of establishment, to accept realities as they are in the fresh air and radiance of to-day ! This trait, in any marked degree, is one of the loftiest, and one of the rarest, virtues of human nature. Most people are content to repeat the traditional doctrines, the prevalent opinions, the fashionable usages, of their time. They are timid, complaisant, and flexible before power, authority, establishment. They have not enough mental impulse and moral daring to start into independence, and engage perseveringly in the lonely task — the toilsome and perilous task — of finding out what the truth is. I have known a

thousand men capable of all other virtues, as it seems to me, where I have known one capable of a ruling passion for the truth. Invaluable, for ever invaluable to an indolent and obsequious world, is the life of that man, who, willing to give up all else, is unable to forego the sight of the truth.

It were an unpardonable error to give any inferior place, in the marshalling of his prominent virtues, to that unweariable faithfulness to the cause of humanity which confessedly characterized Theodore Parker. Think ye it would not have been as sweet to him as to others to draw his scholar's white robes clean about him, and sit aloof from the babel and the squalor of politics and misery, sheltered in his still air of delightful studies? But when his brothers were oppressed, hungry, cold, or bleeding, he felt himself bound, starved, shivering, and faint with them; and he cheerfully made the great sacrifice of leaving his intellectual retirement to work and sweat and lay down his noble life in the midst of philanthropic deeds and schemes.

Central among the high and choice qualities for which this celebrated man deserves to be held up to honor and imitation is his warm and copious affections. All who really knew him on his interior side, knew that he had the deep, tender, yearning heart of a woman. Strangers and foes imagined him a burly iconoclast, a rough hater. But he loved flowers and little children. His eyes were quick to glisten with tears,—sacred mirrors of a generous sensibility. In the last days, as he lay dying, the faithful ones who hung over him tell us that the names of cherished friends, far away, fluttered on his lips, when nothing but the names could be heard. His homely, racy, frequently inartistic writings, are thickly sprinkled with delicious bits of poetry and pathos, spots of tenderest grace and sweetness, like wild roses blooming profusely amongst the granite. If he was intensely and widely hated, he had

the genius to make himself loved also as it falls to the lot of few private or public men to be loved; and, now that he is dead, thousands on thousands of affectionate hearts who knew him only to honor and love him, scattered all over this country, will embalm his image in their souls, perfume the air of the continent with his praises, wherever they dwell or wander within it, and make the sky of his native land the blue forget-me-not of his fame.

Among the many claims of this eminent clergyman to our respectful study and affection, his remarkable piety is by no means the least,—the clear, fervent, healthy type of piety exemplified by him; not the sour, angular piety of dogma, nor the dry and conceited piety of formalism, but the wholesome piety founded on omnipresent mystery, and nutrimented with universal truth and beauty. That sweet and secret love of God, so touchingly realized and sung in the best Moravian hymns, has been known so profoundly, and cherished so abidingly, by few in our external and noisy generation as by him. The writings of the mystics and quietists were the favorite reading with which he solaced his weariness and fed his heart. In his lonely hours of trial and tears, he was not alone; for he felt that the Father was with him. He seemed to lie down and to rise up, to work and to walk, to sow and to wait, in the constant refreshing presence of the Infinite Justice, Wisdom, Goodness. He had meat to eat which tyrants, sluggards, self-seekers, and all that sort, know not of. A large part of his preaching, far more than the public would easily believe, was directed after the gravitation of his own soul to this theme; the verity and the delightfulness of the love of God; the grounds, aliment, and fruitions of the inner life of piety. No hypocrite was he, professing what he believed not, pretending what he had not experienced; and it is therefore significant of much that the lines oftenest on his lips were these:—



"Nearer, my God, to thee;  
   Nearer to thee.  
 E'en though it be a cross  
   That raiseth me,  
 Still all my cry shall be,  
 Nearer, my God, to thee;  
   Nearer to thee."

The chiefest service rendered by Theodore Parker to his age resides not in any new system of teachings he constructed, nor in any literary works he finished, highly important as these are; but in his personality, in the type of character and style of action he exhibited. As a thinker, I suppose it will be freely confessed that he made no discoveries: yet he thought vigorously for himself at first hand; and his works abound in fresh combinations, in original phrases, and everywhere show a cast of striking breadth, and bear a stamp of uncommon strength. His idea of the true ministerial office and function in the nineteenth century, and his own exemplification of that idea, were essentially new; at least, in his career, they had all the aspect and effect of novelty. Instead of perfunctorily serving, in unsympathetic and ghostly methods, a cut-and-dried set of artificial dogmas, or a traditional institution and a separate profession, to be a cosmopolitan master of all knowledge and all virtue, and a brotherly teacher of the same,—towards this idea of the ministry must succeeding generations of the clergy progress, if they would not sink into contempt and die of inanition. In this respect, the example of Theodore Parker's administration of the ministerial office may be of inestimable value in redeeming it from worthless routine, and making it an honest, healthy, fruitful force in the community.

But form what estimate we may of the rank of his ideas and literary works, his idiomatic personality and conduct are the greater things; his original veracity, freedom, valor, superiority to conventional standards, recklessness

of false lustres, fatal determination to see and speak the truth, are, beyond comparison, the greater things. He stands so near to the people, is so like them while far superior to them,—a higher incarnation of themselves, showing them the future results of their half-conscious tendencies, a character and life thoroughly expressed in their own vernacular,—the conduit of his huge pen lay on such a level with democratic taste and the national mind,—that he has won a gigantic publicity, fast becoming popularity; and is certainly destined, as I believe, to wield an enduring influence. To the multitude, his thoughts seem to a great extent purely original, and his speech is of a sort that fetches the echoes straight from their breasts. But if the people, unacquainted with the history of philosophic thought, shall overrate the novelty of his teachings according to some, they will not overrate the *effect* of novelty he has given to them, nor his unique personality and biography, historic henceforth in the full preciousness of their power. Nor in cases like this is injustice done. Admitting that, as a thinker, he was not a peer of the very first; yet, even in this respect, how many of his depreciators can pretend to approach him? And as a leal champion of the right and the noble, a spurner of chains and of bribes, a sworded trumpeter to the charge against falsehood and oppression, who of his contemporaries equalled him? And surely the latter service is immeasurably before the other. Have we not been authoritatively told,—know we not for ourselves,—

“That he who feeds men serveth few,  
While he serves all who dares be true”?

No competent judge, studying the career of Theodore Parker or listening to the reverberations of his tread, can fail to recognize the thunder-step of a true hero. Without doubt, it will be repeatedly said, as I heard a critic say

when the news of his death had just arrived, "He was not one of the seers; not one of the creative minds: I am not indebted to him for a single new thought." Well, friend; for what new thought is humanity indebted to you? Hardly one man of all the men in a century enriches the world with a really new thought. The class of men of creative intellectual genius from all time consists of not more than forty or fifty laurelled heads, blooming in amaranthine glory on the high top of history, grouped and crowned there in unapproachable solitude of superiority. He who finds contributions of new thoughts frequent in modern literature is merely ignorant of the contents of earlier literature. Jonathan Edwards is regarded as a great thinker; yet, in his masterpiece,—the "Treatise on the Will,"—there is not an argument which the scholastics had not advanced before him. William Ellery Channing is acknowledged as a great mind; yet there is not one general idea in his rich volumes which cannot be found in an earlier statement. That Daniel Webster was a great man can hardly be questioned; yet his only original contribution to the world was — Daniel Webster. The construction of a novel scheme of doctrine, or the utterance of deep aphorisms, is not the test to decide whether a man was a great and primal nature: but did he subsidize other men? did he stamp himself on his time? did he live in contact with the aboriginal sources of life, sending impulses from the profuse fountain of his soul to refresh and invigorate the inferior multitude? There are different kinds of great origination. The exertion of a fresh force of character is better than the discovery of an original formula of thought; a kindling contagion of soul is greater than a new intellectual speculation; an independent inspiration of conduct is superior to an unborrowed glimpse of insight. And if, right alongside of that burning example of self-sacrificing heroism and spontaneous toil, you

have lived a life of petty routine, free from the frowns of alienated friends, exempt from the rough usage of frightened superstition and incensed conservatism, and can now coolly criticize this man's title to greatness, and claim to honor, striving to chop them down to the smallest, — why, then, shame on you !

Prejudice and envy, ignorance and scorn, blinded many of his fellow-citizens and contemporaries to the mighty spirit that moved among them in the person of Theodore Parker, and to the rare and memorable life he led among them. Little conception had they how long, how widely and loudly, that potent character and life were destined to tell on the future. Ten years after the death of Channing, I heard a prominent clergyman, who for thirty years dwelt in the same city with him and knew all his doings, say, "I had no idea he would become so great a name and so great an influence." Thus will it be, as I think, with this other light, now extinguished in the flesh only to burn more brilliantly in the spirit. There is a modest grandeur of pride in the simple inscription he prepared for the plain gray stone that should mark his resting-place in the Protestant burial-ground of Florence :—

THEODORE PARKER.

BORN AUG. 21, 1810. DIED MAY 10, 1860.

It tells a story more eloquent than princely blazoned monuments,—a story of early poverty, unfriended toil, chivalrous battle, glorious victory, extraordinary usefulness, and permanent fame. In coming years, many a descendant of those who in his life followed him with obloquy will pause there, and do him reverence with a depth of emotion which the scutcheoned sepulchres of kings vainly strive to evoke. Many a youthful pilgrim, full of noble aspirations, will linger there to breathe a sacred vow, and, with the memory



of this indomitable truth-seeker and truth-speaker, gird his soul for valiant service.

Two objections, I foresee, will often be brought against this brave and gifted teacher, this rich and resolute apostle of the time. I am not concerned to defend him from these accusations, but only, for justice' sake, and for love's sake, to testify to the truth as it seems clear to me, who saw him often, and think I knew him well.

First, it will be said that he was an irreverent assailant and destroyer of men's religious faith. It is perhaps true, that, while his personal affections were swift and strong, his ideal sympathies were comparatively meagre and inactive; and that he approached the opinions and habits of other men rather from the outside as a speculative critic, than from the inside as a loving experimentalist. He had not that deferential mind, that poetic caution, that courtier sense of fitness, which would cause him to refrain from the moss and vines that cling on intellectual ruins; but rather that rude zealotry after reality, which would lead him to ruthlessly tear the moss and vines away, making the ruin unsightly and offensive, till its former admirers could no longer recognize it, and must hate him for showing it so. The poetic perception and enjoyment, the sympathy of genius, which he largely carried into other departments, seemed to forsake him — rather, were borne down and thrust aside by stronger passions — the moment he entered the department of polemic theology or sectarian criticism. His tremendous earnestness in the battle necessitated this: it could not be otherwise. It is true, that, while he had a tender reverence for the natural sacraments, his independent and inevitable search and thirst for what is absolute in religion often made him seem contemptuous of the conventional sacraments. Unquestionably he did, in consequence, often offend sequestered good taste and shock complacent respectability. But I do

not think that good taste is God, nor that respectability is final authority. However much, in a fashionable community and an easy age, fastidious politeness, heartless conformity, timid indulgence, and disdainful aristocracy, may imagine respectability to be the touchstone of merit, and good taste to be the sovereign arbiter in all questions, I must beg leave to dissent altogether from that opinion. Are not truth, justice, beneficence, grander shapes, and clothed with diviner command? Is nothing to be pardoned to honest zeal, if it fail to be artistic and æsthetic? In the name of God, much! When an ethical Hercules smashes his club against some hydra-head, even if the spiring blood and mangled mass do shock silken respectability and sicken squeamish good taste, I believe that the shock is wholesome, and that the sickness may be sanctified. Honesty is higher than politeness in the sight of earnest men. Service takes precedence of sloth in the court of true honor. Leonidas—the altars, hearths, women, and children of Sparta behind the mountain at his back; the million of invaders at his feet; his short dagger, dripping with slaughter, in his hand; his body disfigured with sweat and wounds; his long locks begrimed with dust and gore; falling amidst heaps of dead Persians, while Liberty hovered over him—affords no spectacle of good taste and respectability. Good taste and respectability were to be seen on their couches of ease or at their banquets of wine. He whom we speak of stood twenty years in a pass of Thermopylæ, fighting unto the death with superstition, slavery, intemperance, falsehood, hypocrisy, and corruption. It was a long agony of devotedness, conflict, and toil, continued until he fell in the trenches, and died a martyr to his work. The question is of nobleness, not of complaisance. Inquiries about taste, prudence, measured propriety, are out of place. Honesty, disinterestedness, heroism, service, are the test words. It is inexpressibly contemptible to

condemn such a man, in such an exigency, because he did not studiously adjust attitude, word, tone, and gesture to the standard of a pampered criticism. Such a judgment, common as it is, is an outrage upon all just ethics of correlated character and circumstance.

But Theodore Parker has an ampler justification to offer for his work of negation; namely, that he assailed only what he verily believed to be false and injurious, dishonorable to God and pernicious to man; and, in place of it, he set forth what he thought to be the lovely and eternal truth of things. He was an honest man and an earnest, and therefore intolerant of those dogmas and usages whose antiquated bulks are impediments to progress, and whose decay is corruption in the air; and he wrought more anxiously to recommend what is intrinsically holy, authoritative, and beautiful, than he did to discredit what is but conventionally so. Let it ever be remembered in his honor, that he was by eminence an edifying iconoclast. Much of his originality lies in this combination, which marks his enormous superiority to most of his predecessors in the work of hostile criticism. Those who charge him with pulling down without building up, removing what has sufficed without furnishing a substitute, show an inexcusable ignorance of the matter they have taken in hand. They criticize falsely, from impulse of their own prejudiced supposition, not truly, from sight of his doing. His elaborate works are pervaded by the anxious endeavor to establish morality and piety on their true basis; to recommend the highest moral and religious life by every justly available species of argument and illustration. If on the one side, with destructive axe, he smote the transient away; on the other side, with plastic hand, he laid the rising courses of the permanent. It is the fault of those whose religious thought and feeling are so corrupted and belittled as to fasten on draggled carpet, staring fresco, gairish candle,

and reeking incense, if, when he points them to marble aisle, solemn roof, cheerful daylight, and blue air, they cry, "You have robbed us, and turned us out of doors." Souls of freer scope and larger port, more at home in the universal house of God, will judge differently. To give solid verity of doctrine in room of baseless error, which was Theodore Parker's steady aim, is the greatest service a teacher can render the world. And suppose he made mistakes. To err is human. His sincerity will justify, his titanic devotedness crown him.

Secondly, it will be urged against him, that he was unmerciful in his invective, a fierce hater. In regard to this, we are to consider, in the outset, the cause and nature of his hatred. If he hated much, I believe it will be found to have been because he first loved much. It is very remarkable, in relation to this inquiry, that in all his life, in the long list of his published addresses, he never once assailed one of his personal enemies,—those who so hated him, insulted and pursued him. When we remember the bitter calumnies which were rained on him; the aggravating attacks of all sorts he constantly met on every hand; the quickness and depth of his sensibilities; the copious vocabulary of sarcasm he had at command; the tremendous arsenal of weapons and power ever ready; the perfect ease with which he might often have repelled the accusations, and covered the accusers with discomfiture, shame, and ridicule; and then when we recollect that not in a single instance did he condescend to retort on one of his private foes,—I think we must confess that it is such an example, either of magnanimous self-rule or of lofty serenity, as has but the fewest parallels in history. In the name of Justice, let it be kept in mind, in judging this man, that his terrible rebukes and denunciations were no effusion of gall over private injuries, no revengeful gratification of personal animosity or vent of characteristic spleen, as many appear to suppose.



A malicious hater does not pass over all his individual foes, and select, as the exclusive marks of his assaults, those whom he believes to be violators of the law of God, offenders against the social weal, demoralizers of the country. Theodore Parker's hatred was utterly devoid of that selfish malignity which gloats in its own venom. It was generous affection, inflamed and precipitating itself against its deadly opposite. His love of truth was the measure of his hate of falsehood. His intense fealty to right proportioned his fiery scorn of wrong. As high as the pendulum of his conscientious passion swung on one side in affectionate service of humanity, so high it rose on the other side on mighty detestation of tyranny. His hatred was not selfish, but disinterested; not malice, but championship. It is impossible to reconcile any other conclusion with the fact, that, so long as sneers and vituperative slanders touched only himself, he invariably turned away in silence; and that it was only when he thought truth and justice, the honor of God, the interests of humanity, were outraged, that he grew so wroth and inveighed so fearfully.

Furthermore, we must notice what it was that he hated. What were the objects of his respective eulogy and attack? Very much on this point a fair judgment must turn: for the essential mark of a man greatly good is not, as some try to make it out, that he is always sweet and calm; but it is, that his indignation and scorn, when they do arise, are always frank and generous. Cold-blooded reptiles alone are venomous. Now, no one can study the pages whereon Theodore Parker has so fully recorded himself, and not see that his soul glowed in admiration before the sages, heroes, saints, martyrs, poets, inventors, the great benefactors of humanity, who have bought our privileges for us with their toils and sacrifices; but burned hotly against false teachers, unjust judges, iniquitous rulers, slothful syco-

phants, the tools of tyrants, and the traitors to freedom. His heart was full of love for the great nameless multitude of the common people,—the apprentice, the seamstress, the student, the mechanic. However rugged and rocky his works, they drip with this honey. Meanness, oppression, dainty haughtiness, refusing to touch a burden even with the tip of one of its fingers, selfish cowardice, calculating duplicity,—these he did hate, with a force accordant with the powerfulness of his spiritual make ; and, whenever he saw them, by the loyal spirit that was in him he could not refrain to set his knightly lance in rest, and drive full tilt against them in the name of his God. He was never found, in word or deed, expressing antipathy to truth and nature, science and progress, liberty, good government, and the universal welfare of man. Unlike some of those whom he denounced, he never hated nor despised the poor and the wretched, the exile, the outcast, the prisoner, the slave, the sick, and the dying. On the contrary, he sympathized with them, opened his house to them, gave them of his time, his counsel, and his means, until the ear that heard him blessed him, and the eye that saw him bore witness of him, and the blessing of them that were ready to perish came upon him.

Finally, it must not be forgotten, on this point, that occasions of wrong and jeopardy do arise in this world, when a sacred fury of conviction and feeling is *required* ; that acts of infamous baseness are performed in these days, which *legitimate* a scorching heat of temper, an unsparing heartiness of condemnation and opposition. When the great battle between freedom and slavery waxes fierce and ominous ; when, with high-handed impudence, a new crime is perpetrated against humanity ; when a groggery-keeper, having got a poor fellow drunk on his premises, and taken his money all away, pitches him headlong upon the pavement, and leaves him there bleeding and insensible,—

I say, then it is right and becoming in a man to flame up with a holy vehemence, and to invoke condign retribution on despot, recreant, and ruffian. That is what Theodore Parker did; and, instead of being blamed, he ought to be honored for it. He figures himself, in my imagination, walking through an evil and adulterous generation, feeling as Moses felt, when, on coming down from communing face to face with God on the mount, he found the people worshipping a calf. Some men have not blood enough in them to heave a vigorous wave of wrath from the centre to the circumference of their organism. He had. And this is a consideration to be retained in view; for, while all good men will condemn and withstand every form of wickedness and cruelty, each will do it with a degree of fervor and force varying in accordance with the style and measure of his soul. When an admiral launches his three-decker, we must expect a greater shock in the sea than when a fisherman shoves off his dory. Every man must work after his kind, and in his own stature. They are not always the noblest men who best preserve moderation and quietness. The indifference of dry, cold, impoverished, neutral natures makes this easy for them. The hardness of the task is for rich, warm natures, flooded with sympathetic energy. Nor is such careful tameness always desirable. When their young are assailed, the dove and the wren can be the fiercest of birds; and Scripture tells us that the most awful wrath is the wrath of the Lamb. In a world of trucklers, in an age of trimming and corruption, must an austere moralist never speak in the face of knaves, parasites, and villains, except with his mouth full of meal? Have we really fallen on a place and time where it is pardonable for a scoundrel to *enact* scoundrelism in disgusting traits and nefarious deeds, and unpardonable for an honest censor to *characterize* the scoundrelism of a scoundrel in earnest tones and blunt Saxon? It is just and noble some-

times to be indignant, and indignantly to express it. Did not the meek Jesus thunder on the shrinking scribes and Pharisees, "Hypocrites, affecters of the highest seats, devourers of widows' houses, brood of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" And do you not believe there are characters now on earth as bad as the chief priests and elders of that old day, and leading lives every whit as accursed?

No man will openly venture the conscious dictum, that the rampant existence of evil is to be winked at, but the verbal rebuke of evil is inexcusable. Yet the fashionable verdict in some quarters, on such a man as Theodore Parker, amounts to precisely that. Did not things enough happen to him, did he not see things enough, in his day and generation, to *justify* the most volcanic scorn? Were the seals all taken off, so that his whole experience and his whole correspondence could come to the light, I trow a story might be told that would make the veins of every high-minded man on the continent tingle. But, without that inner unveiling, there lie his life, the treatment he received, the history of the American Government for the last quarter of a century, the conduct of politicians and demagogues, official and unofficial: look and see.

I think, moreover, that the burning edge and momentum of his invective, as he towered and flamed like a modern Habakkuk, dusky with prophetic passion, will be proved wise and fortunate by the result they produce. The earnestness, the smiting, and the fire, fastened attention on him, and will secure circulation for his influence. Had he spoken milk and water, instead of thunder and lightning, his mission would have vanished in impotence. Where would be the Protestant Reformation, had Martin Luther carried the pale blood of Melancthon in his veins, or the two-faced and non-committal management of Erasmus in his conscience? So with this later Luther of ours, whose words



also were half-battles, and whose sturdy blows will ring through the cope of centuries to come.

It is important, likewise, to see who are the persons who accuse Theodore Parker. Are they those who have ever been promptest to sacrifice selfish ease and praise in the service of an unpopular cause? Are they the most earnest laborers in behalf of the poor and the oppressed? — the foremost friends of progressive enlightenment, freedom, and impartial justice? As a general rule, the very opposite. What complaints bring they? Say they that he was a sensualist, a defrauder, an oppressor of the weak, a liar to the people, a squanderer of his time, and a scoffer at the laws of God? No; but that he was an infidel in his speculative belief, and violated good taste in his controversial writings, and was excessively severe in his criticism of those whom he regarded as the foes of truth and humanity. The class and character of his assaulters, and the nature of the charges to which they are reduced, serve well to show how faithful his life was, and how white his monument will be.

And now that his great soul has gone up to judgment, and his poor form sleeps in the earth, nor recks how they rave, shall petty men, who, as far as appears from any thing they ever did, were not worthy to unloose the latches of his shoes, stand up and condemn him because he offended their views, their taste and prejudices? Shall the merest fledglings of the traditional church assume seats of superiority, and complacently sit in judgment on his genius and his works, amidst the applause of those who knew little of him except blindly to fear his teachings? With their three-inch calipers, shall they take the smallness of his mind? with their ludicrous ignorance, pronounce on his lack of learning? with their thrice-refined parrotry, declaim on his want of originality? out of their abject submission to outgrown dogmas of folly and fear, bewail

the benightedness of his belief? and, in their hooded bigotry, accuse him of blasphemous arrogance, and doom him to eternal perdition? Undoubtedly they will. This is one of the penalties heroic greatness, marching before the van of its age, must always pay. Mean men thus revenge themselves on it; or they thus seek to appear great themselves by showing how easily they include a great man, and toss off an exhaustive estimate of him. To the despicable nature, the glorious nature looks despicable too; and when an ant measures Olympus, Olympus is an inch high. To these facile critics, whose triumph costs only impudence, and achieves only a stupid exultation in those who cannot judge, and a noble disgust and protesting indignation in those who can, it might justly be said, "Gentlemen, your labor refutes your conclusion, and will secure a verdict against you. Why are you anxious to prove that this man was not a great man? That he makes you work so hard is a proof of his greatness. When you die, hundreds of public personages, all over the country, will not be found striving to prove that you were not great men. Oh! beware of envy; put away stolid prejudice for candor, and you will see how transparently foolish your attempt is: for surely, in the huge array and rush of affairs marking the middle of the nineteenth century, little men do not play parts so great as to hold public attention, on both sides of the ocean, for twenty years."

I do not pretend that Theodore Parker was faultless, or any thing near to faultless: but I aver that his faults were insignificant in comparison with the mass and glow of his merits. I will not deny that his self-assertion was a little stouter than was uniformly beautiful and pleasing: but how could it be otherwise, when all the world were trying to put him down? I am willing to confess that he had a touch of show and dogmatic complacency in his attainments: but then, unlike the ordinary tribe of pedants and

boasters, he had much to be complacent of; and, as Lord Bacon observes, "the fame of learning will never fly very far, unless it be accompanied by some feathers of ostentation." I think he committed a grievous wrong sometimes in omitting to discriminate between particular acts and general character, and denouncing, as radically bad, men who merely happened in the given case to be on the wrong side. But then a carefully balanced accuracy and restraint amidst the frenzy of battle are too much to expect from human nature; and I believe that his main teachings were centrally sound, and his judgments prevailingly just, both in principle and in the instances. I know how difficult the task to depict, with duly discriminated lines and hues of truth, the characters and lives of the living or the recent dead, while yet—

"So warm the affection, or so fresh the grudge;"—

but it seems to me a much more venial error to soften the defects and brighten the excellences from friendship and charity, than to magnify the vices and blacken the virtues from enmity and envy, or injuriously to distort the proportions from shameful ignorance. Standing before the life-work of a great and brave man, I should be ashamed to fix my attention chiefly on the dross and the dregs. How much juster, as well as more becoming, with hasty glance to skim the former aside; and with forbearing hand to stop short of the latter; but with admiring study to linger before the pure metal gleaming, copious and clear, between!

Accordingly, when I have read some of the attacks made on Theodore Parker,—bigoted attacks, disguised as impartial estimates,—denying him almost every merit save that of vigilant and courageous fidelity to the cause of the slave; asserting that, in talent and learning, he was scarcely above the average; and, at the same time, drawing a

terrific picture of the extent and perniciousness of his influence, — turning over the pages of these sermons and reviews, crowded with gross injustice and absurdity, and remembering how aptly they were calculated to cater to the sectarian religionists of the country, — the great majorities in every community, — I confess I have felt indignant in one direction, mortified and saddened in another. And I have asked myself, while there are so many to vilify and depreciate him, shall there not be a few at least to meet the defaming attacks of meanness and ignorance, and speak kindly and generously of him in accordance with the facts? Shall it be asserted, that he, who was cradled in poverty and nursed on hardship; who steadily strengthened his soul in self-consecration and lonely toil; who, in the inspiration of a martyr-conscience, early identified himself with the most odious opinions and the most unpopular aims; who, friendless and unaided, grew up amidst opposition and scorn, in the face of almost unparalleled obloquy and contempt; who for thirty years fought the battle for influence single-handed against conspiring fashion, wealth, conservatism, and professional cliques; who led a life of unflagging study, dauntless devotedness to his ideas, vestal integrity, and loving-kindness to those who most needed kindness; who step by step, with sword and axe, spade and trowel, conquered his way to eminence and power till the fame of his learning filled the land, his words were repeated in many tongues, his name had penetrated both hemispheres, and, at the hour of his death, he had reached a conspicuousness of exertion scarcely rivalled on this continent, — shall we hear it said by unheard-of upstarts that this man was a coarse and inferior type of manhood, of mediocre ability and acquisitions, such an unproductive appropriator as to be deservedly characterized as a mere parrot of other men's thoughts, a wretched infidel, and, on the whole, a sad curse to his



country and his fellow-men? And shall such monstrous assertions be suffered to pass unchallenged? If there are so many ministers in our pulpits superior to him, why have we not heard of them? Great being and lofty lineage prove themselves in rich production and high climbing. How is it that he alone looms so mighty, as seen through the mists by the contemporary world across the sea? No great fortuities of favoring circumstance helped him. All was ordinary in this respect. His extraordinary puissance, persistence, power, made his opportunities, and achieved for him his extraordinary height of position and sweep of influence. It is pitiful to try to belittle his force and diminish his victory; to arrest the gathering current of admiration by a gale of abuse which shall turn it against him in tarnishing spray. Pygmies, with the gigantic force of popular prejudice at their command, may do much for the hour; but not much for perpetuity. They cannot dwarf down into their own dimensions the colossus whose overshadowing stature irks them.

It is at once amusing and aggravating to notice the egregious blunders of some of these over-eager assailants,—errors which must recoil. They accuse him of being behind the times; taking for his exclusive guides authorities long since exploded, although new and in high vogue when he began his studies. No man, as his intimates well know, and as the freshly cut and pencilled books in his library demonstrate, kept himself more promptly posted as to the latest words in all the grand departments of science, history, theological criticism, and philosophic speculation; the difference between him and these critics being, that he followed the first-rate, untrammelled thinkers, whose researches were solid achievements, while they followed the second-rate expositors, who make their teachings conform to the religious prejudices of the uninvestigating majority. A huge oak of a mind, with all its roots and branches on,

flung into the river of progressive thought, swims resistlessly down in the channel of truth. The little chips of minds, caught in side-eddies, as they see the huge oak plunging on, complacently cry out, "You are behind the times. That *was* the way once; but *now* this is the way." They mistake a backward gyre of four rods towards the hills of the past for a forward slide of four thousand miles towards the sea of the future. It is astonishing, the unhesitating facility with which they map out his powers and knowledge, define his limitations and his ignorance. They are so much greater than he, and know so much more, that it never so much as occurs to them, that, in some respects, he may have transcended their mete-wands, and may have thoroughly mastered and rejected the opinions they rest in themselves and fancy him ignorant of.

They say that De Wette gave him all his biblical lore and critico-argumentative equipments, and that De Wette has in his own country long been utterly obsolete. But De Wette was only *one* of his teachers,—one among the many who brought their costly learning to his aid. And as for the obsolescence of De Wette, and of his peers and still greater successors, these uninformed presumers make the mistake of supposing the vulgar, acrimonious, unprincipled, temporary re-action in Germany for the last twelve years, to be a permanent progress. That re-action, equally infamous in its origin, hateful in its animus, contemptible in its method, and worthless in its fruits, is already touching its close under the rallying influence of such glorious worthies, departed and living, as Schleiermacher, Neander, Bunsen, and Richard Rothe. The man who imagines that Hengstenberg is greater than Ewald, or Olshausen greater than Baur, and that the former can displace the latter, is either an ignoramus or a simpleton. Of course, Theodore Parker was familiar with all these movements, and estimated them at their worth.

Another absurd effort made against him is, to show that he must be a commonplace mind, because, in his life-long warfare against the popular theology and superstitious view of the Bible, he has not devised a single original argument. When scores of minds, of unsurpassed power and learning, had long been engaged on the subject, and had repeatedly marshalled all the relevant facts, and stated all the applicable arguments, how was it possible for any other afterwards to array new facts and deploy new arguments? It would be just as fair to infer that Newton was not much, after all, because he brought forward no new refutation of the Ptolemaic astronomy; when Brahe, Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and the rest, had previously exhausted that subject. There are men now who believe in the Ptolemaic system, precisely as there are men who believe in the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. The existence of the former just as much refutes the mathematics of the "Principia," as the existence of the latter invalidates the theological criticisms of Theodore Parker.

After reading the various depreciatory estimates of him which have been published, and allowing them what weight they seem to deserve; when I glance over the fourteen volumes he has given to the press, crowded with a richness of matter, a piquant peculiarity and energy of style all his own, a comprehensive forecast of the faith of the future, which have already given them a prominent place in contemporaneous literature, and promise them a greating audience and harvest for many years to come; when I reflect on the four or five volumes soon to appear from the press, probably more attractive and valuable than those as yet published; when I carefully compare these works, as a whole, for breadth, freshness, vigor, glowing vitality, with those put forth during the century by the most distinguished leaders of the great sects, such as Leonard Woods, Nathaniel W. Taylor, Charles Hodge, Horace

Bushnell, Charles Kingsley, Frederick Maurice, John Henry Newman; and then when I remember, with a pang of pity for his hard fate in this respect, that, owing to his imprudent toil in the daily breach of duty, he was snatched away, overfraught, before he could write the great work which had been maturing in his brain for twenty-five years, — “A History of the Progressive Development of Religion among the Leading Races of Mankind,” — a work, which, crowning his works and days as he meant it should, would have compelled the assignment to him of a rank among thinkers that his critics, so jealously severe, now will never grant, — then I cannot but feel that intellectually he was a very superior man, a very extraordinary man; while, as a force of character and a contagious influence of life, I plainly see that he was potent beyond almost any person of his time; a man who has widely sown himself, and already come up in a numerous crop, and will come up in larger successive crops.

Vainly will his carping inferiors strive to stamp their measurement and verdict of him on the day which comes after to-day. Time, at last, sets all these things even. When a great man has been, in the main, deeply loyal to truth, God, and humanity, and has done the good cause emphatic services in his generation, even if his failings and sins have been neither few nor small, posterity walks reverently backward, and spreads over them the oblivious veil of charity. While he sleeps the peaceful years away, succeeding time —

“Will not deny,  
Large if his faults, Time’s large apology.”

Who sees not, that, for the mighty monk of Wittenberg, age after age is thus gradually stealing away from the public memory of mankind all thought of his frequent vulgarity, insolence, bigotry, immeasurable invective, but fondly bur-



nishing the records which testify to his transcendent might of affection and courage, his unspotted honesty, his eternal contribution to the progress of the world?

Call no man happy till he dies, said the sage of antiquity. Him we this day only so poorly commemorate, in lamenting we will call happy; for he was faithful to the last. No evil chance or ill-omened mood or weak moment made him waver from the rectitude of his genius, falter in his appointed course, or cast discredit on the high strain of his instructions and the ultimate sufficiency of his trust. However many the angry strokes that fell on him from without, he never felt the bitter blows *within* the breast, the remorseful stings cowards and apostates know, —

“The pangs of chiefs, who, ’mid their foes’ applause,  
Resign their standards, and renounce their cause.”

In dying, true to all his principles and feelings, he said, “When welcomely you lay this worn and tired frame in the welcoming earth, you shall read over me the beatitudes of Jesus alone.” We will not hesitate now to call him happy.

Let us take home the ample lesson of his life. From the contemplation of his surpassing courage, industry, tenderness, severe justice, girded readiness to battle for the needy cause of right and man, piety, final resignation, let us endeavor to gain a higher degree of those virtues for ourselves. Thus shall we profit from having known him. For truly —

“’Tis sweet to hear of heroes dead,  
To know them still alive;  
But sweeter if we earn their bread,  
And in us they survive.”

Talking with him once in his library, on some now-forgotten suggestion I quoted the above lines to him. At the instantaneous re-action of his noble nature upon the action of

the noble words, the tears sprang into his eyes ; and, sitting down at his desk, he asked me to repeat the lines while he copied them into his note-book. From the heavenly domain and haunt of immortals where he now dwells, let us hearken while our faith hears him again saying, even at this moment, —

“ ’Tis sweet to hear of heroes dead,  
To know them still alive ;  
But sweeter if we earn their bread,  
And in us they survive.”

In the death of Theodore Parker, truth loses a stalwart champion, humanity a brave friend, poverty and suffering a generous helper, his country an incorruptible patriot, the earthly providence of God an unflinching servant. His most striking eulogy will be spoken in the muttered congratulations of the allies of superstition, luxury, and selfish power, the irrepressible tears of his friends, the lamentations of the unfortunate he has befriended, the sobs of the young men he has helped to an education, the thanks of all who shall hereafter read his truthful and manly words. The double peculiarity of his heresy and his virtue will cause two visions of him in judgment to be portrayed in different pulpits to-day. Some will depict the scene thus : Leaving the body, he goes up shuddering with terror, and crying, “ Rocks and hills, fall on me, and hide me from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne ! ” An awful visage glares down on him, and a severe voice says, “ Didst thou not disbelieve the Trinity ? Didst thou not discredit the vicarious atonement ? Didst thou not deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures ? Didst thou not trample on the Fugitive Slave-Bill ? Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels ! ” But others will see him passing on to his account with sweet serenity of resignation and trust. Kneeling at the feet of the infinite Father, he says, “ Lord, thou deliveredst unto

me five talents: lo, I have gained besides them five talents more." And a heavenly voice says, "I was an hungred, and you fed me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came unto me. Well done, good and faithful servant: enter into the joy of your Lord." For the former picture, we have the prompting of ecclesiastical bigotry: for the latter, we have the warrant of Jesus Christ.

And now there is a countless host to whom it is painful indeed to feel that they shall never see his face again, but must say farewell to him, — for ever and for ever farewell. His familiar study yonder is deserted long, and will echo to his step no more. Visiting it a few days ago, — as he generously gave me leave to use his books in his absence as if he were at home, — I could not but muse sorrowfully as I sat down and looked about me. His empty coat hung beside the chair. His beloved books, piled in thousands along the shelves, seemed to wait his hand in vain. The desk was there, with the papers all in order; the great ink-stand, with the pen laid across it: but, alas! alas! never again the great heart there, whose throbs shook the table as he wrote, sending its emotional undulations to the limits of the English language. The precious apparatus, lying unused and idle all around, seemed to say, with mute pathos, —

"The silent organ loudest chants  
The master's requiem."

And I came away, laden with sad thoughts, to return there no more.

Farewell now, noble worker, saintly soldier of God! Many true hearts mourn thee. Farewell, and peace be with thee, dear and honored friend, evermore, as thou sleepest in the classic soil, amidst famous men of all ages and races, beneath the murmur of the tall elms that wave at thy head, and the sighing of the favorite pine, planted by

faithful hands of science and friendship, at thy feet! Pardon, pardon us, sacred shade! that in one thing we disobeyed thy last charge. Pardon us that we could not bear to obey thee in this, that thou wouldst have only five of thy countrymen attend thy burial. Ah! as the news flew over our land, such a multitude of sorrowing friends and lovers as Florence could not hold, rebelled against the modest direction, and crossed sea and shore to swell the sightless pageant and thy long funereal train; and following thy bier, our hearts under the shroud with thee, tenderly did we say to each other, —

“Slowly tread, and gently bear  
One that went across the wave,  
From the oppression of his care,  
To the freedom of the grave;

From the merciless disease,  
Wearing body, wasting brain,  
To the rest beneath the trees,  
The forgetting of all pain.

Bear him in his leaden shroud,  
Coffined thus in foreign oak,  
To the uncomplaining crowd,  
Where ill word is never spoke;

From the rubs that fortune gives,  
From the spite that rivals bear,  
From the sneer that long outlives  
All the praise the world can spare.

Bear him from life's broken sleep,  
Dreams of pleasure, dreams of pain,  
Hopes that tremble, joys that weep,  
Plans that perish, visions vain.

Bear him to the body's rest,  
After battle, sorely spent,  
Wounded, but a welcome guest  
In the Chief's triumphal tent.”

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# THEODORE PARKER:

*The Good and the Evil in his Opinions and Influence.*

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## A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

BROMFIELD STREET M. E. CHURCH,

SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 3, 1860.

BY REV. WM. FAIRFIELD WARREN.

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"I am no Flatterer, nor public Liar-general, — when such a one is wanted, he is easily found, and may be had cheap; and I cannot treat great men like great babies. So, when I preached on Mr. Adams, who had done the cause of freedom such great service, on General Taylor, and Mr. Webster, I aimed to paint them exactly as they were, that their VIRTUES might teach us, and their VICES warn." — THEODORE PARKER.

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BOSTON:

CHASE, NICHOLS, & HILL,

43 WASHINGTON STREET.

1860.

IN view of various serious misapprehensions which have resulted from the imperfection of published reports, and from the remarks of strongly prejudiced auditors, the author of the accompanying discourse regards it as due to the public and to himself, — but especially to Mr. Parker's friends, — that the discourse itself be published in full. In this way only can all interested ascertain, each for himself, what was said and what was not. He earnestly hopes that each will read it in the same calm, candid, undeclamatory manner in which all who heard it will attest it was originally delivered. There are very many passages capable of conveying a much more dogmatic and uncharitable impression than was actually conveyed in the delivery. Believing, with Mr. Parker's own intensity, in the right of free utterance for honest opinion, but with equal intensity in personal fallibility, the writer boldly yet modestly submits the discourse to the public eye. It will pass for what it is worth.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY DAMRELL AND MOORE,

16 Devonshire Street.

## DISCOURSE.

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CHRISTIAN FRIENDS, — The bell which summons us together this evening swings not in a Boston steeple. The muffled tollings to which you timed your footsteps as you came up hither, came from far, — they issued from a storied campanile of Italy. Floating to us over sea and ocean, they have lost the harsh metallic clangor of the belfry, and melted into music, soft, subduing. Even so let now all other tongues, which choose to signalize the exit of the departed, chasten their cold and ringing utterance into gentleness and ruth.

The fact that an immortal being has gone up from the busy habitations of men to stand in the presence of the great God, there to be allotted some new sphere of existence, with new and strange and endless activities and passivities, — this one fact would seem enough to arrest the attention of a universe. This, however, is not the fact which gives such interest to this hour, — not the fact which has drawn this assembly together. Such facts are momentarily transpiring; and we are therefore forced to husband up our emotion, curiosity, and speculative interest to expend upon such striking and important celestial translations as come within the sphere-limits of our own interests, sympathies, and friendships. Such a translation has marked the month now closed.

It was afar off; but distance is only one of the circumstances lending a heightened, and even romantic, interest to the event. The merest loungeur on the *Lungo l' Arno* would have felt a

momentary interest excited in his sluggish soul could he have been told, as that little veiled and draped funeral-train bore Parker's corse to the *Campo Santo*, "There goes a stranger to his rest, four thousand miles from home." There is an air of touching romance about the death of any pilgrim on any foreign shore. How much more when *such* a pilgrim dies in *such* a clime! It is a son of rugged, cold New England dying in the sunny clime of Italy; it is the poor farmer-boy of Lexington ending his wanderings, his struggles, labors, life in beautiful, classical Florence.

How choice a place and time to die! — there, in that sweet basin through which the classic Arno winds its way, the sanctuary of Art, the theatre of Europe's Renaissance, the home of the Medici, the city of proud republican traditions, of present beauty and promise. What a grand Nebo does Fiesole's ancient head afford from which to gaze over into the unknown land! what sweet breezes are those of Bellosguardo to cool a dying brow! Stands not Galileo's astronomic tower there still, from which to reconnoitre heaven? Who could ask a prouder burial than to be laid under the same hallowed soil which covers the dust of Michael Angelo, Macchiavelli, Galileo, Guicciardini, Alfieri, Aretino?

And then the time, — beautiful May! How sweet and fresh and life-giving seemed those swelling hill-sides; how bloomed those matchless gardens; how gently played the zephyrs of spring! Cathedral and chapel even are full of green trees and festooned flowers; for it is Mary's festival. Bewildered birds, losing themselves in the green groves under the lofty church arches, pour forth their riotous joy in holy places, unmindful of ostiarius or beadle. How the gay fountains dance and sparkle in the shimmering sun! How rare a time to spread the couch for a peaceful death! Nothing around so much as whispers of the great natural and moral disturbances of the world. The rumbling earthquakes are all hushed; winter's ruin is hid beneath a wealthier robe of beauty; the storms of revolution which beat and rage around Sicilia's ancient coast are all unheard. Quiet, charming, musical Tuscany — joyful, May-clad, emancipated Tuscany — spreads out



her lap, and in it hushes her weary, fainting, foreign lover to his slumbers.

But not yet have we reached *the* feature of this late event which gives it interest through the world. It is not because of death's inherent solemnity, nor because of this death's peculiar romance, that the nation pauses, even in the midst of political turmoils and "anniversary week" excitements, to discuss the recent news from Florence. Other men die; other sons of New England have had the honors of Italian burials. Why, then, *are* we here?

I answer: The death of Theodore Parker is the cessation of one of the great forces of the moral and immoral culture of the American people, and hence is an event of social, political, and religious interest to every American citizen. I have invited you in hither, not with a design to inform you what disposition the world's great Judge has made of his soul; not to felicitate the American churches upon the sudden removal of the great gainsayer; not to intone a jubilant *Te Deum* over the end of a heretic, — but to tell you in all candor what I think of the reputation, opinions, and influence of the fallen teacher. I am aware of the delicacy of the task. I expect to displease both friends and foes. I expose myself and my motives to misconstruction, and perhaps shall not succeed even in saying what I really mean. But, whilst realizing all this, I deem the closure of Theodore Parker's lips an event of too great importance, an event too nearly and deeply affecting the interests of American Christianity, to be suffered to pass unnoticed. Should any be disposed to remind me that "of the dead good only is to be spoken," I would simply say, such was not the maxim of him of whom we speak. Whilst yet the eyes of the nation were wet with the tears called forth by Webster's death, Theodore Parker stood up to utter his estimate of the good and the evil wrought by that great man. I do but follow his example.

My acquaintance with Mr. Parker was partly epistolary, partly personal. How it began I do not remember. It was never particularly cultivated on either side. He always left the latch-string out for me, but never drew me into unsolicited

intimacy. My acquaintance was sufficient to give me insight into the man's character, yet not enough to blind and prejudice me. I was always thankful that he never seemed to try to lay me under obligation. He would, indeed, sometimes give me a handful of recent sermons or lectures, but always with the open understanding that the communication of his views was as great a pleasure to him as their reception could be to me. I have eaten salt with him, but only "Attic salt." Accordingly, though I fully agree with the writer who declares that "the next most atrocious thing to flaying a man alive is to *Gilfillanize* him," — that is, insinuate yourself into his society and confidence to get material for public tattle, — I do not feel at all fettered in my utterance to-night by any of those obligations which personal kindness and hospitality ought always to beget. The only obligation of this sort of which I am conscious is that I am under to him for his kind consideration, if such it was, in leaving me thus free.

The influence of Mr. Parker and of his writings upon my own mind was never very great. As my acquaintance with his writings was prior in point of time to my acquaintance with the man, I will first speak of them.

I was living in a southern city, almost within hearing of the beating surf of the Mexican Gulf, when various discourses of Mr. Parker fell into my hands. For months I had been laboring under speculative difficulties, which I felt must be settled before I could ever lay the foundation and carry up the structure of an intelligent and satisfactory faith. I was more than a thousand miles from any relative or tried friend; completely emancipated from all home and educational associations; dependent upon none for livelihood or preferment; entirely free to form and adjust my views of religion, society, and life according to my own convictions. I think I had a little of that foolish ambition, which few young men wholly escape, to use this liberty, and "think for myself." At any rate I did use it. It was in the midst of my consequent perplexity and strain of mind that I perused Mr. Parker's discourses, actually predisposed in his favor, and hoping to be helped to relief. But I found none: why, I hardly knew

then, though I have seen since. As I look back now upon my painful struggles in that distant city, I can see that my difficulty was a purely speculative one. It involved the determination of the question, What is the ultimate ground of scientific certitude? Parker, of course, gave me no answer to that question. I was determined to accept no man's teaching until he could prove its truth to me. Mr. Parker taught me of the existence of a personal God; but, when I asked for the proof, I found that he could adduce no particle of evidence not adduced by Paley and Chalmers. Indeed I thought his argument the least convincing of the three. So I piled them all away together, — Parker at the bottom, Paley next, and Chalmers atop. Then I returned to my proper problem. Such sceptics as Pyrro and Bishop Huet delighted me; but Mr. Parker seemed to me to have no better reason for his beliefs than the straightest orthodox for theirs. So much for the influence of his general theological writings.

Mr. Parker's carefully elaborated version of De Wette's "Introduction to the Old Testament" was the first work I ever owned in the department of biblical criticism and interpretation. It was my sole manual for several years; yet I found, in various quarterlies and theological encyclopædias, such conclusive demolishments of its main hypotheses and principles, that I held my judgment in check. Subsequently, when I came to prosecute my studies in Germany, I found how perfectly extravagant was the remark of Mr. Parker, that De Wette was "the ablest writer in the world on that theme." I found that Dr. De Wette was a forgotten man. Though ten years had not passed since his voice had ceased to be heard in the auditoriums of Berlin, not a party, not a disciple was to be found to perpetuate his memory, or disseminate his principles. Indeed he had no system. Whilst his heart was enlisted for Christian truth, his head was turned and confused by the influences of his time. He confesses his life a failure in these touching lines, written but a little before his death, and communicated to the American public by Dr. Schaff: —

Ich fiel in eine wirre zeit,  
 Des Glaubens Einfalt war vernichtet.  
 Ich mischte mich mit in den Streit;  
 Doch, ach! Ich hab' ihn nicht geschlichtet.

("I lived in times of doubt and strife,  
 When, childlike, faith was forced to yield.  
 I struggled to the end of life;  
 Alas! I did not gain the field.")

In the new developments of Germany, De Wette has fallen into complete oblivion. Some of his works, such as his Commentaries, are valuable for their extensive collation of other men's views; but all that was original with him is repudiated or forgotten, by both Orthodox and Rationalists. He has been completely superseded; and we are sorry to see attempts made, at the present day, to force this antiquated lumber into popular circulation, as the last and best result of German scholarship. It is a wrong to the German infidels themselves. Baur and Strauss would resent such an allegation. For all practical and popular purposes, be it remembered, De Wette is utterly worthless. To the American public, his reproduction here was as great a misfortune, as the publication was pecuniarily disastrous to its editor.

My personal intercourse with Mr. Parker was confined to his study. What a great storehouse of learning it was! What ranges of vellum and sheep bound tomes were there, piled from floor to ceiling! Yet with what honest pride he used to point out that shabby, worn-out old copy of Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary as the nucleus of the whole collection, the first book he ever owned, and tell of the quarts and quarts of blueberries he had to pick to pay for it! In the way of art, I remember nothing save that little marble statuette or bust of Christ, which stood upon his study table, watching each stroke of that potent pen! It used to pain me to see it there, and the marble lineaments themselves were sad. Our conversation was usually general, though sometimes he would ask me what I intended to do. He had a great many erroneous impressions respecting the doctrines and spirit of Methodism, some of which, I hope, were cor-



rected. When I told him I was going to Germany, he seemed delighted, and gave me some very characteristic advice. "Go to Tübingen" (the last citadel of German Rationalism); "go to Tübingen," said he, "by all means. Tübingen sustains the same relation to Germany to-day, which Wittenberg did in the sixteenth century!" This advice, like much other, I took the liberty of playfully laying upon the table.

Among the theologians of the Old World, Mr. Parker is, of course, little known. In England, the Infidel party have found his writings very saleable and serviceable ready-made material; and therefore there he has had great circulation. England, however, has before had the deistic disorder; and those who have passed through the varioloid seldom contract the smallpox. In Germany, it is true that Mr. Parker's writings have been translated; but a translation into the tongue of that omnivorous people, who reproduce every modern publication down to such as the Mormon Bible and the "Great Harmonia," is surely an equivocal compliment. Most of the German theologians who have looked over his writings seem to regard him as a rather spicy re-hasher of their earlier rationalistic literature. Strauss told me he had read his critique on the "*Leben Jesu*," and thought Mr. Parker would have to put that into his Retractations, if he ever published any. In Italy he is unknown; although an article published in 1857, in the Jesuit organ, "*La Civiltà Cattolica*," *Sopra il Presente e L' Avenire del Cattolicismo negli Stati Uniti*, has furnished its readers a very elaborate and tolerably fair exposition of the theological movements in which he is so prominent a landmark. His reputation and influence are almost exclusively cis-Atlantic. We should naturally expect it to be so. In those old countries the doctrines of Mr. Parker are threadbare, the tritest of all trite things. Here their singularity gave to their talented advocate a "lone conspiracy," which would have rendered the commonest man a celebrity. Circumstances have contributed more to the growth of Mr. Parker's reputation, than to that of any other religious teacher of whom I know. His native talent, unique

style, power of sarcasm, unflagging industry, and wide range of feed, all did something ; but all these, directed in ordinary and inconspicuous channels of usefulness, would never have made the name of Theodore Parker a household word from Maine to California. I will not say that there are in the active American ministry twenty men of the same reading with Mr. Parker ; but I do but utter my honest, unbiased estimate of his native power, when I say, that, from my acquaintance with that ministry, North and South, East and West, I honestly think there are at least five hundred, who, had they lived and moved under the peculiar circumstances which gave Parker this prominence in American eyes, could and would have achieved and maintained a fame at least equal to his.

We now come to the determination of the good and the evil which has accrued to the American people from this great didactic career now closed for ever. God give us wisdom to rightly and wisely discriminate. Mark well, and continually remember, that in the following remarks I do *not* speak of Mr. Parker's moral character. I speak of *his influence*, and of that *only*. I shall not undertake to determine how far the good results of his ministry are instances of God making the wrath of man to praise him, nor how far the evil effects were undesigned, and contrary to his wishes.

1. Among the beneficent results of Mr. Parker's ministry, I mention, first, his influence upon public opinion with respect to the subject of Education. However we may differ from Mr. Parker in religious matters, however we may question the details of his educational scheme, all intelligent, large-minded men must feel that the public owes no insignificant debt of gratitude to him, for that ardent zeal and unwearying effort which he ever displayed in advocacy of a thorough, practical, yet liberal education of all the people. Himself by birth a plebeian, by instinct a leveller, by choice a Jeffersonian, he could tolerate no sacred reservations in behalf of classes, least of all the monopoly of knowledge. Feeling that universal education was at once the right of all,

and a necessity of our political and social institutions, he threw his whole soul enthusiastically into his pleas whenever opportunity was afforded for them. For the service thus rendered in the formation and sustenance of a healthy public sentiment on this subject, I would bring, and in the name of all lovers of man lay upon Parker's tomb, a fadeless wreath of gratitude.

2. Secondly, he preached and lectured against Intemperance. Herein he was a national benefactor. He has our thanks. This service, however, is sometimes overrated. A careful study of his utterance will show us, I think, that, instead of penetrating to the hearer's conscience, and showing him the inherent *sin* of this form of self-indulgence, he contented himself usually with depicting to him those attendant and consequent evils, which are so intrinsically ghastly as to scarcely need depiction, and then giving him a little Poor Richard advice to keep clear of the habit which leads thereto. The motives which he sets forth are seldom drawn from any higher plane than merely the prudential. He cast his influence against that legislation which stands upon our statute book to protect the people from their poisoners, and was no doubt entitled to some share of the responsibility of defeating its execution in Boston. Still he meant, honestly meant, to foster temperance and purity, and all affiliated virtues; and, so far as he succeeded, Boston and the Commonwealth are bound to grateful acknowledgment.

3. We regard the influence which Mr. Parker has exerted upon the public mind with respect to the position of woman, the Peace movement, and kindred reforms of the day, as on the whole beneficent. Less radical than the self-constituted champions of these various causes, yet at the same time in advance of the general public, he has served to modify the violence of the one party, and to open the eyes of the other. On doctrines and projects so inchoate as are most of these to which we refer, no man can expect to find another who will perfectly agree with him on all points. Mr. Parker's views seem to have been well matured, and in the main safe. His brave words in exposition and enforcement of them have done good.

4. Fourthly, we instance the political services of Mr. Parker. These we regard as infinitely outweighing all others which he ever rendered to his native land. The grandest thing he ever did was to stand up in this northern metropolis, at a time of decadent public sentiment, and month after month demand the rigid subordination of human authority to God's. In certain classes not easily reached by other agencies, he did very much to generate and keep alive a political conscience. He fearlessly, continually, impetuously taught the existence of the Higher Law. He regarded the State as a moral agent, under every obligation of the moral law,—under every threatening by which it is sanctioned. How stirringly eloquent were his rushing words when this was the theme which warmed him! To him it seemed bad enough for an ignorant and passionate individual to sin: but to see a great and wise people, in the multitude of whose counsellors there ought to have been wisdom, and in whose organic equipoise of forces passion ought to have been held in leash; to see such a people, as a people, wittingly and persistently trampling under foot every principle of justice and humanity,—this fired his soul, made his blood to fairly boil with indignation! On this grand text he always could preach with “an unction.” I hope I shall not be called irreverent if I say, that, on this point, “he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” I fear we have *some* need of such a teacher still.

Slavery being to him intrinsically the concentrated sum of all villainies, and at the same time the immediate occasion of nearly all the infamous political and civil action of the government, it was natural that Mr. Parker should bring his tensest powers to bear upon the demolition of the system. By all his native love of right, by all the spur of moral convictions, by all the love he bore his land, he felt bound to fight the foul institution. In this good fight he heartily enlisted all his powers,—his stinging eloquence; his varied learning; his mother-wit; his keen understanding; head, heart, hand, and—rare phenomenon!—his pocket-book.

Deadly, however, as was his hatred of the system, impetuous as were his acted and spoken hostilities against it, he



never sanctioned the radical views and measures of the ultra abolitionists. He never played into the hands of southern politicians by conceding the national character of slavery under the great Federal Charter. Nay, — loudly to his praise be it spoken! — nay. He had a lofty faith in the actual political institutions of this good land. He believed that we only need to bring back the administration of government to the spirit of those institutions, and then to lop off a few creatures of local and abnormal law, in order to make this American State answer to its proud and vaunting boast, —

“The land of the free and home of the brave.”

When personal friends — warm friends — were saying, “All is lost; there is no hope save in revolution,” Mr. Parker rang out his voice louder than ever over his crowded auditories, “No, no! America shall not fail!” Year after year he bore the pressure, — resisted entreaties, resisted threats; refusing to sanction the anarchic projects of his friends. Year after year he went like a man to the ballot-box, and illustrated his faith in his political principles. When others saw only swift-coming disaster, he was still hopeful; evidently believing that what the cheerful bard sang of Old England is equally true of New: —

“Our nursing mother is not exhausted yet;  
 There is sap in the Saxon tree:  
 She lifts her bosom of glory yet,  
 Above the mists to the sun and sea.  
 Fair as the Queen of Love,  
 Fresh from the foam,  
 Or star on the dark cloud set,  
 They may blazon her shame  
 And scoff at her name;  
 But there's life in the old land yet!”

We accord therefore to Mr. Parker, and that most cheerfully, high praise for his efforts to elevate the politics of the country. Should I say that the services he has thus rendered the American people surpass by far those of many a distinguished senator at Washington, I should but speak the truth. Had it not been for the influence of his rigorous teaching

over those vast masses which he drew around him, had they not received from him those sound principles of political responsibility which they would not go elsewhere to learn, we shudder to think of the doom which might have overtaken Boston long ere this. May God soon send them another apostle, who, without assailing the holy verities of Christianity, may carry forward with equal efficiency the same great teachings!

Such we regard the main results of Mr. Parker's ministry which deserve to be called beneficent. Other incidental goods may have accrued therefrom; but these are the chief. We have tried to deal fairly, and give our subject his fullest due. With painful feelings we turn now to the other inquiry, and ask after the evil results of the ministry now terminated. God help us, here above all, to be faithful alike to the living and to the dead. Wherein has Mr. Parker exerted a baneful influence upon the American people? Variously.

1. First, he has contributed to the extent of his ability to fix in the popular mind a very low and unworthy conception of God.

This is perhaps the very last charge his admirers will expect; but I make it advisedly. I know that men are found who claim that the chief charm in Mr. Parker's views, his grand superiority over orthodox Christians, lies precisely here, — in his sublime and beautiful delineation of God's nature and character. From such we must beg to differ. We cheerfully grant that Mr. Parker has said a great many beautiful things about God, — things whose linguistic felicities we wish we could rival. We grant that Mr. Parker's God is quite a respectable advance upon that "dismal," "diabolic" old "Moloch" of the elder Calvinistic doctors, and something of an advance upon that easy, nerveless, old grandmother whom the Universalists tucked up in the throne of the universe and set on rockers;\* but, as for conceding that Mr. Parker's God

\* These expressions are as offensive to the writer's taste as they can be to any reader's. They were employed solely as argument *ad hominem*. They are partly quotations from Mr. Parker, partly reflections of his style. Believing, as the writer

approaches in moral beauty or dignity or amiableness the God of the Scriptures, we never can do it. Look at the two. Mr. Parker's God is a being of such natural hebetude, and of such moral insensibility, that, according to Mr. Parker's own account, he has article'd out this "mute, naked, ignorant child" of his, whom we term *man*, under the hard "apprenticeship of nature and law," and left him here toiling, struggling, suffering, and sinning for six thousand years, without ever paying him one fatherly visit, or sending him one message of affection to cheer and strengthen his failing heart. Ages on ages rolled away, according to Mr. Parker, generations after generations lived, suffered, and died, before any knowledge of God got into the human mind, — any idea even of spiritual and invisible essence. All this time men were left with no loftier or worthier vent for their native religious instinct than the worship of ugly, senseless Fetishes. And, when men did achieve a higher notion of the normal Object of this instinct, it was no thanks to this great, impassible wretch of a spectator whom Mr. Parker calls God. It was an achievement of man's own good brain and quickening heart, and to man alone belonged the credit. But even after we had done this much, even after we had risen from the mire and slime in which he first placed us, and where he had amused himself for centuries by heartlessly watching our wretched wriggling, — even then, though we had so conclusively proven that we were worthy something better than that low animalism to which he had first doomed us, that great cosmical Embodiment of phlegm moved not a finger to help us. This child of Providence was "crying in the dark," — crying for his Father. Unaided he had discovered the existence of that Father, — proven His recent whereabouts; and now he wanted to see Him. The accumulated sorrows and suffering of long millenniums of utter orphanage pressed out continual

does, that the conception of God entertained by all Christian denominations is essentially the same, he is not wont to speak of the Gods of different bodies as Mr. Parker was. He furthermore feels that he should deserve contempt had he used the above language as petulant flings at the doctrines of sister churches. These remarks will throw light upon certain expressions employed in the description of Mr. Parker's God.

sobs : " Oh that I knew where I could find Him, that I might come even unto his seat ! " But there was no answer. The royal child was left there in the dark, sobbing, yearning after the Father of whom he had so lately learned, — agonizing to find Him, and learn all about Him. And all this time there lay this great, stupid, immanent Divinity athwart the stellar spaces, all heedless of this poor yearning creature who had proven himself " the thriftiest child of God. " Not one syllable did He utter, no blessed " Lo ! I am with you ; " no messenger did He send to tell men how to do right and be happy. No, no. " If men want to know any thing about me, or about the blissfulness of moral agency, they may find it out for themselves. " With this divine reflection, and with a sluggish vexation at the troublesome brat whose cry had occasioned it, the torpid old Stoic of eternity relapsed into his ancient, everlasting doze. This was Mr. Parker's God ; and what did it avail to style him the tender " Father and Mother of men " ? Does calling a clod " God " make it one ? Does the christening of a great blind and blindly operating force " Father, " give that force paternal intelligence and soft-heartedness ? Should a Christian parent treat his children as Mr. Parker represents God treating his ; cursing them, to begin with, with an intenser sensuality than there was any need of, and then lending no helping hand or encouraging word to help the poor little wretches up to a larger and higher life ; keeping himself eternally behind the curtain ; feeding them by machinery, and leaving them to clothe and otherwise furnish body and soul as the great " mother of invention " might suggest ; giving them over to the laws of their being to work their own way up by personal experiment and suffering to manhood's maturity, — I say, should any Christian parent of this land attempt such a treatment of his children as this, his name would be an execration in all the world ; an outraged and indignant people would rise up to demand the deposition of such a father from his office, his immediate commitment to prison or madhouse.

How different the God of revelation ! " Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth all them that fear



him." "His tender mercies are over all his works." In the beginning He gave His child the fairest and most munificent setting up. He was wont to visit with him at decline of day; teaching him all he needed to know, and showing him how to live. He bore with the disobedience, perversity, and waywardness of His child; plead authority; pointed to consequences; chided, entreated, "strove" with him, — all was vain. Still He came, came personally and by messengers, — would not be shut out and off the premises, — until His poor, debauched child became utterly lost to all spiritual influences, deaf even to his Father's voice, too blind to discern his heavenly form. Nor even then were the resources of God's paternal tenderness exhausted. In the person of his Son He comes with warm flesh-hands to lay hold of the ruined, blind, almost insensible creature of His own image and likeness, and lifts him up. He is willing to suffer with and for him. By supernatural power He opens those blind eyes which sin put out, unstops those deaf ears which sin closed up. Then taking the bewildered being by that death-struck hand, and breathing the inspiration of infinite divine sympathy into his soul, He gently draws him, and says, "My son, come home." He smoothes the way with providences; supports the weak and staggering form; gives back one by one the lost and forfeited powers to serve as milestones of the homeward journey; and as to what He has stored up against the prodigal's final arrival, — what fattened calves, and robes and rings, — we only know that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Whose God now is the most fatherly, Mr. Parker's or the Christian's? Why, the Christian not only has and uses every single proof and illustration of God's natural and moral perfectness which Mr. Parker has, in metaphysical necessities and in the works of nature, but in addition to these he has the whole supernatural history of man, every line and event of which is lustrous with the glory and the love of God. Had Mr. Parker described his God (and often he did) as possessing the absolute perfection of the Christian one, he had no conclusive evidence thereof. It must stand as a mere assertion, sufficiently refuted by the

stoical indifference and moral inaction, which, according to him, has characterized the divine history since man has had a being.

In view of these facts, I make no scruple in saying that Mr. Parker contributed to fix in the popular mind a low and unworthy conception of God; that he dimmed the lustre of God's perfections; and in his system, though not perhaps in his words, so presented, so misrepresented our common Father, as to make it difficult for men to feel and own His claim to their love. I do not say *he meant to do so*, — *I do not think he did*; but such was the legitimate result of his system. In this he wrought an irreparable mischief; and, so far forth as his views accomplished their natural tendency, so far forth I pronounce the ministry of Parker a curse to human society. Ofttimes his own expressions bordered hard on Pantheism, and the whole drift of his principles was in that direction. Strauss predicted he would bring up there. Death came too quick. Although unwilling to openly assert that the famous "Father and Mother of men" was "impersonal," he yet repeatedly refused to call him (?), her (?), it (?) — whatever it was — *personal*. And this hybrid, hermaphrodite, neither "personal" nor "impersonal" Nondescript, is the false God, the Dagon, which Mr. Parker set up in Music Hall for Boston Christians to worship. So far as he seduced them into this idolatry, so far was his influence a bane.

2. Secondly: Mr. Parker was behind his times in many matters of science; and hence his influence has served to fix in the popular mind various scientific errors which later investigations have completely exploded.

It was a great pity that a man of his position and influence should have adhered so tenaciously as he did to traditional scientific absurdities, when all the world was so rapidly outgrowing them. There was some excuse for the reluctance of the Romish priesthood, and even of Protestant Turretin, to acknowledge the demonstrated motions of the earth. We find that excuse in the character of the times in which they lived, and in the character of their education, if such it could be called. But for a man of Mr. Parker's opportunities and

professions, in the full light of the nineteenth century, to cling with such fatuity to old hypotheses, from which the progress of science has confessedly knocked away every shadow of foundation,—surely this was very remarkable.

In early life, Mr. Parker seems to have fallen under the influence of those phrenological sages who have exhibited such rare consideration and anxiety for the cultivation of the American mind. He drank in their hypothesis of universal development with the rest; and its influence is perceptible in the whole texture of his philosophy. I will not say that his views of cosmogony, or of current natural life, exactly corresponded with those set forth by Oken, and the author of the “*Vestiges of Creation* ;” but I do say, that, unless I have greatly misapprehended them, they resembled them vastly more than those of the highest scientific authorities of the present day. These authorities affirm that every historical science of nature points back to a supernatural beginning of every family of organized being, — a real and proper creation. Agassiz, Whewell, Lyell, — all great scientific investigators, — declare, with remarkable unanimity, that every evidence in the heavens above and in the earth beneath lies directly against the *development* hypothesis. They challenge the world, present or past, to furnish one instance of transmuted species or spontaneous generation. Cross’s *acari* and Darwin’s pigeons are acknowledged failures; and I know of scarce one great, reliable name to-day, in England or America, which can be quoted in support of the repudiated hypothesis. All acknowledged authorities agree in predicating a supernatural origination of every kind of organized and living things, — an origination exceptional to all known present laws and forces; an intelligent, divine creation. It is true that Mr. Parker talks of “creation” too; but, if I understand him, it is only that perpetual creation by which the face of the earth is renewed with every passing season, generation, life. God is creating yonder on the Common, yonder in the harbor depths, here in this ever-wasting body. He *may* have used expres-

sions meaning more than this ; but there are none which I can now recall.\*

How far he was behind the biblical critics of Germany, we have already intimated ; and on this we need not dwell. De Wette was one of the first German theologians whom Mr. Parker ever studied, and beyond him he never seems to have gone. He read others, — very many ; but, after having committed himself so fully to De Wette, it was hard to see him so flippantly disposed of by Baur and his colleagues. We doubt if even Mr. Parker would venture to repeat, within hearing of Tübingen, “De Wette is the ablest writer in the world on biblical criticism.” He would have too much regard for his own reputation as a scholar.

His views on another point, the History and Philosophy of Human Society, were very antiquated, at least a century behind the times. To hear him lecture on this subject, one would

\* There is much confusion in Mr. Parker's expressions on this point. In Discourse V., of his “Theism, Atheism, and Popular Theology,” he seems at first sight to use the terms “Creation” and “Providence” in their ordinary sense. He clearly distinguishes them ; saying “the one is described by a point, the other by a line. He speaks not only of the creation of organic beings, but of inorganic matter. He speaks of a time “before the universe had existence,” &c. &c. At the same time, it is evident that the term *creation* is not employed in its proper sense, from the fact that he predicates a certain “material,” anterior even to material atoms, from which they were created. He says, in summing up : “*Each atom*, with its statical and dynamical powers, — the mineral, vegetable, and animal forces of the universe, — must have been *created* by Him . . . OF PERFECT MATERIAL.” Here, certainly, is no *creatio ex nihilo* ; hence, no proper creation at all. The popular, as well as the theological, *usus* demands more than a creation *ex nihilo privativo* ; it is satisfied with nothing short of a *creatio ex nihilo negativo*. Nor is the above a solitary instance. He scarcely ever speaks of creation without stating that it was “of perfect material,” or “perfect substance.” That his views respecting the origin of organic beings were substantially as represented in the text, is incontestably settled by the following passage from his last work, his “Experience as a Minister.” Speaking of the various historic forms of religion, he says : “Each has grown out of the condition of some people as naturally as the wild primitive Flora of Santa Cruz has come from the state of this island, — its geologic structure, and chemical composition, its tropic heat, and its special situation amid the great currents of water and of air ; as naturally as the dependent Fauna of the place comes from its Flora.” What could more explicitly betray his belief that the Fauna of every clime proceed from its Flora, its Flora from geologic, chemical, climatic, and other physical causes in the way of strict and simple natural law ? It may be hard to reconcile this language with expressions employed in his earlier years ; but it surely right to look in his latest writings for his most matured opinion. So doing, we think our point is fully substantiated.



think himself transported back to the eighteenth century. First you have Hobbes's "State of Nature;" then "Rousseau's *Contrat Social*;" then a prospective "*Utopia Saint-Simonienne*," minus the communism. And the most insipid feature of it all is, that these crudities of the French revolutionary epoch are all set forth as something *so* new and fresh and world redeeming. How any man of such universal reading, and such taste for independence, ever succeeded in bringing himself down to the tasteless taskwork of transfusing life into these stale depositions of that diluvian period, has always been a mystery to me. Perhaps the reason is to be found in the fact that deistic principles cannot be reconciled with any other theory of human society than that of Rousseau; and, rather than renounce these cherished principles, Mr. Parker may have concluded he could afford to ignore the conclusions of a Stahl and a Huntington, — nay more, the unanimous testimony of universal history.

Now, had these various antiquated views been merely abstract, isolated, scientific errors, it would have mattered little. We should not have mentioned them. We care not to know to which of the theories of light Mr. Parker gave his adherence, — it would have no bearing on our present investigation. These matters to which I have alluded, however, do have relations most intimate to every scheme of religious teaching. Deny original creation, ignore a *real* Providence, and what is left of religion? The remnant is not worth saving. So far forth then as Mr. Parker's ministry has served to the dissemination and conservation in the popular mind of those old exploded naturalistic notions of Cosmogony, Anthropology, Sociology, so far forth it has been a maleficent ministry, prejudicial not merely to revealed religion, but equally so to sound science.

3. Thirdly: Mr. Parker devoted his utmost energy to the demolition of the whole structure of revealed religion, — its evidences, doctrines, and institutions alike. If he honestly believed, after candid qualification for judgment, that that system is false, delusive, injurious to men, he did right; but, as I as honestly believe it a true, beneficent, and divine sys-

tem, I am bound to characterize the influence of his ministry in this regard as unmitigatedly disastrous.

4. But, fourthly, the grand tendency of Mr. Parker's ministry was not only to overturn Christianity; it was also to diffuse erroneous and unfair impressions respecting it. I am forced to say, that misrepresentation *seems to me* to have been the grand implement on which Mr. Parker relied in his "destructant work." Certainly no other ever wrought so efficiently for him. Instead of making Romanism responsible for its own follies and absurdities, Calvinism for its, Methodism for its, he identifies Christianity with each in turn, and makes it bear the odium of all. He perpetually aspersed the Christian people among whom he lived, attributing to them beliefs which he knew they repudiated with loathing. To be a Christian was with him to be a bibliolater, — to devoutly believe in what he elegantly termed the "damnation of babies," to discount all gentle virtues and good works, and bigotedly hate all such as cherish and do them. It was to believe in a hideous God, an impossible human nature, a dismal demonology, ghastly divine murders, and a closing sham-judgment. He tried to undermine men's faith in Revelation, — not half so much by solid argument, as by those side-thrusts and bitter sneers and sarcasms which constituted so largely the staple of his discourses. Travestying every sacred formula, every holy doctrine, until scarcely recognizable, he persisted in setting these wicked mimics forth as the actual beliefs of Christendom.

Take up any of his descriptions of the doctrine of God according to the "popular theology." In the name of Evangelical Christendom, I have merely to pronounce it an atrocious libel. Tell me, ye who have sat for twenty, thirty, forty years under the teachings of the "Christian" pulpit I now fill, — tell me if in all that time you have ever once been told of a God who delights in "the damnation of babies"? Nay, were there not eloquent, vehement repudiations of such a shocking notion ringing down from hence upon the people years before Mr. Parker was born? Who has ever stood up here to tell you of a God who has unconditionally predesti-

nated men to endless damnation merely to illustrate his irresistible sovereignty? Was not this pulpit founded here expressly to protest against such blasphemy, and to teach men truth? Who has ever stood here and told you that God is of so *vengeful* a nature, that, only after slaying his own innocent son, he was willing to show mercy? When was you last told that Satan was stronger than God, and likely to get the better of him in the long run? Come: these, according to Mr. Parker, are the doctrines of "popular theology." Isn't Methodist theology popular theology? If it is not, if the theology of the largest ecclesiastical body in the nation cannot be called the popular theology, what can? If it were true that one Christian body, however small, taught a doctrine of God *nearly* free from all the objectionable features against which Mr. Parker protested, candor would seem to have required him to make an exception in favor of that body so far as it was his ally. How much more was he bound to abstain from indiscriminately denouncing the doctrine of the largest church of the land, when the doctrine of that church respecting God was, as we have seen, really superior to his own, and especially when she patiently, laboriously, and successfully opposed this doctrine to all the errors against which he battled, years and years before his voice was ever lifted! In all this Mr. Parker was, in my estimation, neither modest nor fair. Most of his references to the best and holiest men now living on this earth are full of bitterness and spleen and venom. We have no angry retaliations to return. Even an Alva could refuse to war with the dead. We only *wish* these statements were *not* true; but, being true, we feel compelled to make them, doing it far "more in sorrow than in anger."

I believe, on valid grounds, — though I cannot, of course, adduce those grounds here, — that man originated by direct creation of God. I believe that if he had been left, *in puris naturalibus*, to his own unaided, uninformed constitutional powers and susceptibilities, he would have been the ignorant, helpless brute which Mr. Parker everywhere represents the primitive man to have been. I do not believe, however, that man was so unnaturally abandoned; or that, had he been, he

would ever have risen to any conception of spiritual existences. I believe God revealed himself to that primitive creature as his Creator, as the one and only God to whom his service and affection were due. I believe, that, after sin had penally and naturally affected man, that which was before mere inertia in human nature became a constant downward force,— antagonized indeed by reason, conscience, divine actuations, but nevertheless a steady moral gravitation. From the beginning God has kept himself in communication with this perverted creature; schooling him by discipline, overruling his mistakes and sins for good, thwarting his plots, wooing and striving and teaching in all tender and gentle languages, — more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. In the Bible are found, as I believe, a historical account of these divine doings in the earth, sufficiently full for all the necessities of these late-coming generations to which we belong,— a sufficient revelation of the character and interior disposition of God; a clear enunciation of all human duty, Godward, manward, and selfward; authenticated promises of all needed good; the full constitutions and patents of all divine institutions; in short, a complete “Anweisung zum seligen Leben,”—the ONLY directory to happiness and heaven. Believing these things with all the intensity which can come from a conquered skepticism, and a personal experience alike of sin and of pardon, I regard them as truths more vital to human well-being, on the scale of endless existence, than any other in the whole range of human knowledge. Whenever, therefore, I see a man weakening the power and influence of those truths over men’s minds, either by fair argument or by scurrilous sneers, I regard that man as, wittingly or unwittingly, injuring his race, — cursing humanity to an extent beyond all measurement. Of Mr. Parker’s ministry, then, what else can I say than that, so far as its influence has been to undermine these grand permanent beliefs of Christendom, it has been a curse. In my view, every soul which through his influence has renounced the great doctrines of Christian redemption has thereby jeopardized his everlasting interests. He has cut loose from moral motives



of the highest character ; relinquished the brightest exemplification of divine philanthropy the universe can furnish ; exchanged a certainty for hypotheses, pledge for hope, possession for baseless and fruitless expectation. By as much, then, as eternal things do overweigh the things of time, by so much do the evil and blighting influences of Mr. Parker's ministry preponderate over all its good and beneficent ones. No open speculator from Boston's treasury, no unrelenting, heartless landlord, no dissolute public officer, no wholesale or retail rum-seller, no pimp of North Street or seducer of Beacon, has ever wrought, in my judgment, such extensive, effectual, irretrievable mischief in this city, since the advent of this distinguished errorist in it, as has he.\* Funds are replacable, wrongs to widow or fatherless may be outgrown, the debauched may be lifted up by reform ; but, when the Saviour is taken away, where shall the most wakeful of Marys find him ? Other evils need only be temporal : the loss of religion is the loss of eternity.

THEODORE PARKER, the studious farm-boy, the restive theologian, the combative preacher, the arrogant philosopher, the ardent reformer, the general iconoclast, — Theodore Parker, — has passed away. In the prime of life, the maturity of his powers, the zenith of his glory, God summons him away. He had done with him here ; and that autocratic will could not alter one hair's breadth the higher will of God. In his hands, into which each one of us must fall, we leave him. Ours is not the great white throne ; and he who told us, " Judge not," assigned the best of reasons.

But whilst it is not given to us to sit in judgment on men's

\* Had the writer, instead of using the above language, tamely said that Mr. Parker's influence in opposition to Christianity had done *immeasurable or infinite harm*, it is extremely doubtful whether the statement would have ever called forth a single remark. Why, then, need such an ado be made, when the opinion is expressed that the harm thus wrought has been greater than certain definite and limited evils ? The writer does not say that Mr. Parker was a speculator, a rum-seller, or a seducer ; he simply endeavors to express his profound sense of the evil wrought by the agency of Mr. Parker. Were he a disciple of Mr. Parker, he should need to employ a similar style of comparison, in order to vividly express his profound sense of the good wrought by the same agency. A tame, worn-out adjective could never do it.

souls, and fix authoritatively their moral relationship to God, we may and ought to studiously weigh their current and posthumous influence. The interests of truth and the interests of men alike demand it. I have striven, therefore, in these rude sentences, — put hastily together amid all the distractions and under all the lassitude which belong to the closing hours of Anniversary Week, — to set forth *candidly, kindly, and faithfully* my soberest, maturest estimate of the good and evil in the influence of Theodore Parker. I feel that I have failed to do justice to such a theme. Perhaps I should still, were I to study it a lifetime.

Mr. Parker is gone. We shall have no more. Not that genius is extinct. Not that learning shall have no future votary. Not that deism will not live, — it will live so long as man's proud heart shall think itself wiser than God. Still, to stand in Music Hall, to promulgate the views of Parker, to do it with equal keenness and superior grace, to draw yet denser crowds of willing listeners, — all this will not be to BE PARKER. Do you not see the vast difference between being PARKER and merely a "PARKERITE"? Ask Rochefoucauld, and he will tell you of a difference.\*

Few will weep. Few have wept, I take it, except upon the platform. It is not meet. Whatever his work was, in this strange web of woven lives, Providence tells us it is done. Why is it not? Boston has other teachers, — inculcators of higher doctrine, more liberal charity, safer science, superior virtues, equal political integrity, and a diviner holiness of heart and life. No such hideous excrescences deform the Christian teaching of present Boston evangelizers, as need to drive away the most fastidious, be he only honest, and anxious to learn from any and all sources, — Nature, Reason, Providence, Revelation, Experience, — the one grand Will of God.

Friends, are you trying to learn that Will? Are you trying

\* One would think the above language clear to any ordinary understanding; but, as it has been absurdly misconstrued, the writer would add, that the difference spoken of is simply that which exists between feeling one's self a master and enjoying the glory of such a position, and feeling one's self a mere disciple and incapable of ever becoming any thing more.

to do it? But a few days, and you will be helpless. Body prostrated, spirits dissipated, mind roving, heart sluggish, your soul face to face with destinies unending. How, then, will you look upon life, and the uses to which you are putting it? Oh! if ever you have suffered your religious convictions to be shaken by sneers or cavils or argument, I pray you to look at the winning and beautiful model of character which Christianity holds up, and to ask yourself if it be not desirable. I pray you to think of the misery God foretells, and the heaven he promises, and to ask yourself, What if this prove *all true*? Even if you have so far been influenced as to *doubt*, give your poor soul the benefit of that doubt, — it is a principle of all humane jurisprudence. May the great Father of Lights guide you into all truth; give you all a stronger relish for it; qualify you for celestial blessedness; and bring you finally into its full fruition, no more to err, or sin, or suffer, — no more to miss or frustrate life's divine, eternal meaning. This in Christ. — AMEN.





THEODORE PARKER:

A

# SERMON

PREACHED IN NEW YORK, JUNE 10, 1860.

BY

REV. O. B. FROTHINGHAM.

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## DISCOURSE.

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Acts xxiv. 14: "THIS I CONFESS UNTO YOU, THAT AFTER THE WAY THAT MEN CALL HERESY, SO WORSHIP I THE GOD OF MY FATHERS."

As I read these words of the apostle, there rises before me the image of the man who might have uttered and applied them to himself; the man who, for twenty years, represented heresy in America, and whose death deprives heresy of its ablest vindicator as a system of positive belief.

When the tidings of THEODORE PARKER'S death came to us last week from Florence, my first impulse was to hasten home, and say my poor word about him at once, while the memory was fresh in the minds of men. But instantly it occurred to me, that this was a memory that would keep itself alive some weeks at least, even in our restless community, where thought succeeds thought, and impulse follows impulse, so fast, that impressions are obliterated almost as soon as traced. Day by day, the significance of that departure has been coming to me; and even yet I have by no means fathomed it. There are men whose loss cannot be estimated in many days. It grows with time. It breaks on mankind in successive shocks. Like tall towers, their shadow lengthens as the sun descends; and, when the sun has fallen far below the horizon, the lingering light, slowly creeping up towards their summit, and standing like a star at their highest point, shows how high they are

lifted beyond the ordinary world, now hearsed in darkness. First, the circle of immediate friends is sensible of personal bereavement, and saddens at the thought of seeing the beloved presence no more on earth. Then, to the large congregation of Sunday listeners, comes the heavy assurance, deepening week by week, that their teacher has gone from them; that they are a flock without a shepherd; that they must live henceforth without the stimulus of his abounding and kindling thought. Next, the great company of the miserable, who had been to him (never in vain) for sympathy, counsel, and aid, feel the chill of friendlessness stealing over them,—the sense of loneliness in the world. Presently the winter draws nigh again. East and west and north, the lecture-rooms open their doors, and gather their assemblies; but the earnest speaker, who made each lecture-room a church, comes not with his weighty burden of truths. By and by will occur some crisis in public affairs, and men will instinctively turn towards him who had always been to them a better conscience and a truer heart; but the brave word cannot be uttered any more. The grandest prophet of the land is dead, and multitudes are the poorer in hope and consolation. Slowly the tidings of this death will creep down to the Southern plantations, and cause a sinking in the heart of the slave. The news passes over Europe, and the friends of truth everywhere heave a sigh and drop a tear for Theodore Parker. Thus one relation after another feels the shock of such a death, as time passes on; thus, further and further, the darkness stretches its line.

All people acknowledge the death of Theodore Parker to be an event. There is an awe in it which has hitherto sealed the lips of the public organs. When has there been so little said on the decease of a remarkable man? We hardly know what to say; are scarcely prepared to say all we feel. They who feared and hated him—and they are



many — make their words of criticism few, as if out of respect to the greater number who revered and loved him; while these last find, as yet, no words adequate to express the sentiments which fill their minds.

The noblest have spoken in their noblest strain. Wendell Phillips has paid his eloquent tribute; Freeman Clarke has paid his: but the man only seems greater as we try to say how great he was. It will require a great many voices to tell all the truth about one who was in himself a great many men. What I have to say this morning is plain and poor enough, — the report of an eye neither wide nor sharp-seeing. Let it pass for something, that it is sincere and modest, — the best I have to give.

What strikes us first in this man is the varied wealth of his endowment. New England put into him her choicest elements; made him, as it were, the incarnation of her characteristic genius. Her granite hills bequeathed to him their stern inflexibility. Her climate gave him hardihood and health. Her flowers distilled into him their tender fragrance. Her summer and winter left upon him their deposits of verdure and of snow. A Massachusetts father, hard-working and simple, gave him a good supply of solid, homespun faculty, a strong practical understanding, an independent cast of thought, an incorruptible integrity. From his mother he received a love of literature, a taste for the beautiful in all arts, especially the enthusiastic fondness for poetry, which never deserted him. Through near ancestors, the spirit of the Revolution transmitted to him its moral earnestness; its heroic temper; its firm, steady, and true allegiance to a noble standard of right. He never forgot that his grandfather formed the first line and drew the first sword in the war of independence. Every time he entered his library, he passed between that grandfather's musket and the fire-arms of the grenadier whom his ancestor took prisoner at Lexington; and, each time he passed

these relics of a glorious struggle, his heart seemed to swell anew with the love of liberty. The lofty spirit thus native to his constitution was nurtured in tender years by the great historians and bards of the world. Homer sang to him his mighty epic; Plutarch read to him the biographies of sages and heroes; the great classic poets breathed into him the music of their sublime thoughts. At an age when children are at the primary school painfully learning their primers, Parker was sitting at the feet of Milton, drawing hearty inspirations from that immortal mind. Fit, though few, were the boy's teachers, — teachers not of his understanding only, but of his soul. The prophets came to him in advance of the pedagogues; and before he had any thing considerable of what the world calls knowledge, before he could enter on what is vulgarly termed education, these had grounded him in the everlasting principles of justice, and had planted in him the seeds of all noble aspiration. The poetic faculty belonged to him in no small measure. His early writings glow with the charms of a wonderful imagination. Lectures, sermons, essays, were exuberant in an eloquence rich and fragrant as summer fields; a rhetoric that imparted an aroma to the most abstruse theme, carrying hearers and readers over vast tracts of speculation as over long reaches of delight. His pages were chambers of imagery; and so astonishingly vivid was his fancy, that even in the latter years of his life, when his talk became more ponderous and his manner more plain, he could give a charm even to statistics, and could make audiences smack their lips over the driest crums of fact.

But the great quality of the man's mind was his understanding, — an understanding so eager, steadfast, resolute, and comprehensive, that it rose even to the rank of genius, and claimed as its own a share in all the departments of the higher reason. This hunger for knowledge was im-

mense, was insatiable: he fairly panted in his thirst for truth. It seemed as if he was bent on drinking the fountains of instruction dry. Wisdom was welcome from every quarter; but he must have it at first-hand: he would be content with nothing but the ultimate principles of things; he would have nothing less substantial than facts,—no guesses, or theories, or conjectures, or systems made to order, to cover up ignorance or perpetuate error; but things as they were, the aboriginal data of thought. He would give any thing for knowledge. His father could not give him Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary (the newest and best at that time): so he sold huckleberries of his own picking, at three cents the quart, till he was able to buy it for himself. In this spirit he lived and worked to the end. The school could not feed him; the college could not feed him. While teaching in the country himself, he kept up with the course of education at Harvard, and pursued independent branches of study beside. He mastered, in a fortnight, books which ordinary scholars toil over for months. "I wish to know something about the Manicheans," said the youth one day to Andrews Norton, the most learned of the Cambridge professors. "Do you?" replied the professor. "Well, the best book is Beausobre; but it is very long and tedious and heavy."—"Beausobre! I have just finished that. Is there nothing more satisfactory?" Dame Nature took the eager boy by the hand, and led him through her untrodden paths. She carried him far and wide; told him about her trees and flowers and insects. He went with her through the long geologic epochs; he went with her along the pathway of the stars; he went with her into the secret places of the human frame, and listened patiently as she described all the fearfulness and wonder of its making. He went on the tract of the metaphysician all over the twilight regions of the mind; plunging into its thickets, and scaling its mountains.

He followed the historian to the ends of the earth. Every science laid its contributions on his table; every discovery whispered its secret in his ear. Foreign nations talked to him in their own speech. Early in the Crimean War, I found him, one morning, studying Russian. Another time, he was busy with the grammar of an obscure language of Africa. He would master a strange tongue in order to write a chapter. This was the character of the man. He made the railway car a study, and the sidewalk a place for meditation. He spared no toil, he knew no fatigue, he confessed no difficulties, in the pursuit of truth. Nothing was sacred that stood in his way to this; no prejudice; no persuasion; no creed; no establishment; no traditions, holy and tender; no men, however great or dear. He would reach that, if every step he took blistered and tore his feet. I emphasize this peculiarity, because it is the key to his whole position as a thinker and a worker in human affairs.

Thoughts, institutions, men, he tried by the practical understanding. He had small respect for persons; little reverence for institutions; no patience with prejudices. His individuality was sublime. The life of others passed into him and enriched him; but all the sunlight and the rain could make him no other than he originally was. He was himself. Every thing that came to him he made his own; but he never gave himself away to creed or party. Like the everlasting glacier of the Rhone, he turned the summer rains at last into his own substance. This man knew all philosophy: he could give an account of every system, from Pythagoras to Hegel; he could take them all in pieces, and discuss the merits and demerits of each particular school. But he himself belonged to no school. His philosophy was his own; it was the result of applying his sturdy reason to the facts of human nature and human life as they lay open to his observation. He was as thorough



a Transcendentalist as Emerson; but the same people who called Emerson a mystic, called Parker a preacher of common sense.

Mr. Parker knew all about theology, and had every form of theology at his tongue's end: yet he will hardly be acknowledged in the end as a great theologian; for the reason, that his mind lacked that sympathetic quality which helps one to appreciate foreign modes of thought. In construing the letter of beliefs, he sometimes missed their spirit. A perfect master of the forms of doctrine, he often misjudged their hidden sense. It was hard for him to pass himself into other minds, or enter into other experiences, or live in other states of development, than his own. Hence a certain narrowness, and, as it were, perversity, in his interpretation of systems. His descriptions of the Bible beliefs, for instance, just enough according to the letter, were often — through a certain lack of sympathy, doubtless, with the Oriental mind — whimsically exaggerated and grotesque. His expositions of the Orthodox creeds frequently ran out into caricature. He read the language of David and Augustine as he would read what had been printed for the first time in this morning's paper. There seemed to be no twilight region in his mind, in whose cool and starlit recesses he could escape from the glare of his unsleeping intelligence, which forced him to see every object in sharpest outline, and, with every object, its long and heavy shadow. Hence the limitation which was imposed upon his own theology. It was a theology of the reason. Clear, plain, strong, it certainly was; and it would have been final, if the understanding was the final judge of these high themes. But imagination and sentiment, awe and wonder, have also their part to perform in the construction of a creed; and, where these are wanting, the system, however true, must be destitute of soundness, richness, fulness, and grace. It is a rational system rather

than a spiritual one, a system of philosophy rather than a system of faith. When one passes from the theological books of Mr. Parker to those, for instance, of James Martineau, it is as if he went from a Puritan meeting-house into a German cathedral. The atmosphere of devout feeling, the mystery, the awe, the worship, the chastened reverence, the large embrace of a charity that makes allowance for all expressions, the fine perception which recognizes unity of faith amid diversity of credence, the genius which goes to the creative sources of truth, the delicate tact which catches a meaning half expressed in barbarous speech, or only hinted at in symbol, and draws out a thought that was lurking but half consciously in some saintly mind,—those qualities of close-grained and sensitive intelligence, which make Mr. Martineau possibly the foremost theologian of the age, if possessed by our noble countryman in measure at all adequate to his other gifts, would have made him peerless among the constructive thinkers of the world.

Not that Mr. Parker was destitute of religious sensibility: there was, indeed, no lack in him of that. He had tenderest emotions Godward; he had great reverence for the eternal; he could adore, he could aspire, he could bend, he could pray. The thought of the Infinite Love never failed to bring the tear to his eyes. Spiritual things were everlasting realities to him. He possessed the ethereal elements of the soul in sufficient abundance to furnish a less extraordinary man. But, in him, they bore no proportion to his inordinate intellectual power. His understanding fairly mastered them: it even took possession of them; appropriated them; brought them within its own category; catalogued and arranged them out, after the most approved method of philosophy.

Mr. Parker had studied the human soul in all its moods and manifestations. The phenomena of dreams, visions, prophecies, oracles, witchcraft, magic, demonology, and the

like, were perfectly familiar to him. He knew the writings of the great mystics in religion, — Augustine, Tauler, Behmen, Fenelon, Law, Kempis; they were interesting to him; they touched him: but they did not fairly enter into him as into a congenial soul: he was not in easy communication with such as they. His attempts to discourse on these finest themes of the spirit were not successful; at least, the specimens we have are not fine. The poorest sermon, in his remarkable volume of Ten, is the sermon on "Communion with God;" and of the four discourses preached, two or three years ago, to the Pennsylvania Progressive Friends, the one on the "Soul's Delight in the Living God" is by much the weakest: indeed, it scarcely rises above the level of a somewhat overstrained sentimentalism. Mr. Parker's ambition to be universal and complete compelled him to recognize the existence and the importance and the beauty of these exalted and sublimated states of the soul: they must be included in a complete philosophy of religion. But it seemed as if, from his own experience, he had not much to say about them: his lungs were not formed to breathe the rarefied atmospheres of the mystic. Mr. Parker was no child of the tropics; no Southern airs breathed around him: the element of passion, in his composition, was very small. Self-collected, self-centred, self-regulated, master always of his thought, he seemed to know nothing of that force of passion which drags mortals down into sensualism; and as little did he appear to know of that other force of passion, which bears immortals away, as on wings, to the heavenly seats. The beast was not in him; but it seemed, also, that the seraph was not. Sin, for him, had no fascinations; vice had no seductions: what temptation was, he must have known rather from observation than from experience. But the realm of the absolute was also, to him, impalpable: he could not lose himself in the infinite, nor was he quite

comfortable unless his feet were touching the solid ground.

It was this immense preponderance of the pure reason, in Mr. Parker, that made his denials seem so naked, and his radicalism look so bald. No tender conservatism of pious feeling threw a softening veil over his positions, to drape in fragrant loveliness the bare rocks of his statement. His criticism stood out, undisguised and unrelieved, before all men's eyes: every point of doubt was sharpened and protruded. When he smote an idol with his axe, all men saw the sparks. Naturally enough, then, he seemed a destroyer; yet he came not to destroy, but to fulfil. They who passed him by carelessly, at his work, and saw the heap of ruin he had about him, said, "He is undermining the foundations of truth;" but had they gone nearer, and looked down into the pit he had dug, they would have seen the great stones piled one on another,—the basis of the more glorious church of the future. He was infinitely more a believer than he was a disbeliever,—infinitely more a dealer in affirmations than in negatives. He made no denial, save in the interest of some grander assertion; no analysis that did not look toward a nobler synthesis; no criticism that was not designed to minister to a vaster faith.

He was the grandest Theist of the time. Lofty beyond example were the pristine truths he labored to set forth; pure beyond comparison were the religious ideas which composed his exalted system of philosophic religion. No teacher has unfolded a conception of God so sublime, so clear, so overwhelming in glory and light, as his. He taught that God contained all possible and conceivable, ay, and inconceivable perfections: the perfection of being,—or complete self-subsistence, as conditioned only by himself; the perfection of power; of wisdom; of justice; of love; of that innermost element of all,—holiness. He taught that God is immanent in the world of matter and the world



of spirit, — dwelling continually in both and animating both, — while running out beyond either, and infinitely transcending each.

He taught that God was perfect Creator, perfect Preserver, perfect Benefactor; that he was the Father and the Mother of the world. And this idea of God he got, not from the testimony of the material universe, not from the Bible, not from the church, not from the Christ of history, theology, or experience, but, as he said, from the soul's intuition of the Divine, aided indeed by Bible and science, by church, and by tradition, but not proceeding from them, nor dependent on them. As the body had an eye by which it perceived the outward and material, so the soul, he contended, had an eye by which it looked immediately on the inward and spiritual. To open that eye was to gaze upon the very face of God.

Take now, if you will, this idea of God, carry it out to its philosophical results, and you come at once upon the reason of Mr. Parker's long series of denials. You see how impossible it was for him to believe in the vulgar supernaturalism of the churches; how intrinsically incredible to his mind was a *violation* of natural laws; how irrational must have seemed a plan of salvation proceeding on the idea that the universe had, in the first instance, proved a failure; that man, the crowning work of a perfect Maker, had disappointed his Creator, thrown the earth into confusion, and driven the Infinite God to the necessity of saving his creatures by an artificial and over-strained device of redemption. If miracle meant the infraction of the laws of matter, it involved a self-evident contradiction; for how could a perfect Being break miraculously through his own perfect regulations? If revelation meant the communication of truths wholly transcending the human mind, then revelation could not be admitted; for the perfect Wisdom must be for ever imparting itself to all who will receive it.

If inspiration meant the bringing of light by some private and exclusive windows into a select soul here and there, then there could be no such thing as inspiration, in the usual sense; for the God who is Spirit must be always holding intercourse with willing spirits, breathing truth into the truth-loving, justice into the upright, holiness into the pure, and love into the simple.

You comprehend from these illustrations how Mr. Parker's denials followed from his affirmations, and how the beliefs of Christendom disappeared from his system only because they were swallowed up in his more comprehensive truth. He did not believe as the multitude believed, because he believed vastly more than the multitude.

Mr. Parker's idea of the infinite God was the key to his whole theology; nay, it unlocked every chamber of his thought. It gave him his lofty conception of human nature and human destiny. It gave him his noble views of Providence. It did not give him his belief in immortality; for that, like the belief in God himself, was a fact of human consciousness: but it colored that belief, and shaped it, and glorified it, and made it wonderfully living, rich, and beautiful, attractive beyond any which mankind at large have ever entertained. This idea of God filled the worlds, the earths, and the heavens with light and hopefulness and love.

Let us bless Theodore Parker for the power with which he established, the earnestness with which he vindicated, the fulness with which he illustrated, the manifold zeal with which he applied, this great conception of the Infinite Goodness. Though not exclusively his own, nor, strictly speaking, original or peculiar with himself, he has done that for it which may fairly entitle him to claim it as his contribution to the thought of the age. And, while we bless him for this, we must bless him for other things incidental to this: for showing how the great beliefs of religion

are native to the constitution of the soul itself; for showing how the immortal verities of faith are planted deep in human nature; for opening the inward eyes, and enabling thousands to see God and truth and immortality and duty as the most near and profound of realities; for emancipating the multitudes from the bondage of superstition, and teaching them to dispense with the precarious props of church authority and historical records; for making broad and decisive the distinction between religion and theology, the spirit of faith and the letter of the belief, the essential and the non-essential, the permanent and the transient, in the Bible, in Christianity, in creed, and in worship; for making the deepest things plain and popular to the simplest people, bringing religion down to common life, and proving piety to be co-extensive and co-incident with the faithful performance of every daily duty. For doing all this, and a great deal beside, for which others will thank him better than I can, let us bless the memory of Theodore Parker, and confess his divine mission to the race.

I own to you, my friends, it seems to me a descent to leave this elevated plane of thought for the level of sectarianism, and to ask if Mr. Parker was a Christian. He was, and he was not. If to accept the popular theology is to be a Christian, Mr. Parker was none; for he rejected that theology, from its first axiom to its last result. If to believe all one finds written in the New Testament is to be a Christian, Mr. Parker was none; for the New Testament was to him only an imperfect record of early Christian ideas. If to look up to Christ as one's *Master* in thought or life is to be a Christian, Mr. Parker was none; for, with the deepest reverence for Jesus, and the tenderest love for him, and the sincerest acknowledgment of his inestimable service to mankind, he questioned his infallibility, and refused to call him Lord over the humblest soul. If an acceptance of all Christ's moral teachings is necessary to

constitute one a Christian, Mr. Parker was none; for he unreservedly questioned the practicability of Christ's precepts; and, for his own ethical principles, fell back upon the primeval instincts of human nature. In fact, under no technical definition of the term "Christian" could Theodore Parker be included. But if he is entitled to be called a Christian who holds Christ's deepest and most transcendent truths, — the divine Fatherhood, and the Brotherhood of man, the essential divinity of human nature, and the omnipotence of the Divine Love in the realms of error and sin; if he is a Christian who aspires to be perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect, struggling incessantly, and amid tremendous difficulties, to reach the highest standard of virtue, and to beget in himself the peculiar qualities of the Christian life, — humility, devoutness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and loving-kindness; if he is a Christian who leads a consecrated life, holding himself with all his gifts and goods at the service of his fellow-men; if he is a Christian who takes the cross, and bears it faithfully night and day, through evil report and good report, and only prays for strength to carry it yet further on, — then I honestly declare Theodore Parker to have been a Christian; and have no hesitation in expressing my belief, that Jesus would cordially have acknowledged him as among his truest disciples.

It was not chiefly as a thinker that Mr. Parker influenced the world, but as a character. Every thing with him ran to conscience, — talents, time, money, books. He was an embodiment of the principle of duty. He had many virtues; but eminent above them all was the supreme virtue of justice. That quality, indeed, he incarnated. If he claimed it somewhat absolutely for himself, he demanded it imperatively for others. For every man and woman and child, of whatever class and degree, he demanded this, and nothing less: justice for the poor, the weak, the



disfranchised, the wronged, the defrauded; justice for the pauper child; justice for the orphan; justice for the drudge, male or female; justice for the slave. He stalked along with the mien of a hero and the arm of a giant, smiting wrong on the right hand and the left; fearing nothing himself, but being a pale and perpetual terror to the whole race of evil-workers. Sternly self-denying, he held men to self-denial; telling them all the while, however, that self-denial was the sole and all-sufficing joy. Was he austere, harsh, denunciatory? Did he seem to be bitter and malignant and vindictive; too little considerate of human weakness, too little forbearing towards human error, too little tolerant of human prejudices? We must remember, 1. That he was created, and sent into the world, to be a prophet rather than a saint,—a reformer rather than a regenerator. He was constituted an iconoclast. The Thor hammer was put into his hand, with fatal commission to use it unsparingly. On a friend's remonstrating with him for his severity, he replied, "Some are born to let their sunshine and their rain fall to encourage the tender seeds of hope; but I was born to thunder and lighten, and shatter things to the ground. Pity me: it is no joke this dealing in thunder and lightning." To such a nature, intolerance belonged as a necessary feature. It is not a vice so much as it is a limitation. Nay, in some sense, it may be even termed a virtue; for are not the flaming fires His ministers? We must judge men by their faithfulness to their own work and commission. Luther and Melancthon stand not before the same bar.

2. Nor let us forget that Mr. Parker had fearful provocations. Men called him infidel who believed himself a builder-up of faith. Men called him atheist who did more than they all in these last years to rescue the age from materialism, and bring it to belief in the living and infinite God. He was shunned and denounced by some who

should have called him brother. He was preached against and prayed against. He was pointed at as an enemy of his kind. He may have been embittered by this, and yet have retained virtue enough to constitute him an eminent example.

3. But the decisive word in this connection remains to be said. When charity becomes intensest, it scorches. Amiability is love in its negative form; but when love assumes its positive form, when it becomes an earnest and broad humanity, then it begins to sparkle and flash and smite. He who reveres the good, and cleaves to it, necessarily abhors the evil, and denounces it; and he who has small abhorrence of evil has usually but a feeble allegiance to good. It was out of the bosom of his loving-kindness that Jesus launched the frightful bolts of his invective at the scribes and Pharisees of his time; clearing the atmosphere of their hypocrisy by dreadful process of thunder-storm, that the common people might not suffocate. It is out of his heart of infinite pity for the world, that the Almighty Father makes the wicked consume away, and buries faithless nations in shameful graves. He who speaks in the interest of principles cannot be silenced by a refutation; and he who labors in the cause of man must use the vices of men as his tools. What seems cruelty to the individual may be mercy to the whole, and to them likewise in the end.

Do not think, I pray you, that Mr. Parker's justice was nothing more than the cold, biting, freezing wrath that many insisted it was. It ran out till it took the form of a very large and a very tender, generous, persevering beneficence. He saw, that, to large classes of his fellow-creatures, justice meant mercy, meant compassion, meant pity and help. It meant all this to the unfortunate, to the neglected, to the despised; it meant all this to the uninstructed, the unguided, the misled; it meant all this to the

passionate, the foolish, the wicked. These people came to him with their complaints, — came to him like children to a mother; and he gave them what he had to give, — money, if they needed money; counsel, if they needed counsel; warning and rebuke, if they needed these. He visited the poor in his hovel, the prisoner in his cell, the convicted felon in his dungeon. He gave shelter to the foreign exile: in his house, the fugitive slave had a home. His congregation, it has been said, raised more money for benevolent objects than any three societies in wealthy Boston; and his private munificence was large, to a degree that would have been celebrated if he had suffered his left hand to know what his right hand did. He was pastor to the poor and the afflicted, the orphan's protector, the widow's friend, the minister of all whom his ministration could benefit. As was touchingly said of him in a late obituary notice, "The sincerest mourners at his death will be the troops of young people whom he has helped to an education, and establishment in life, and the poor and unfortunate, whose wants never appealed to his sympathies in vain."

These things belong to the world: let the world have them, and learn from them how it may increase its charity. Let it scatter these virtues like flowers over the grave of the great heresiarch, who protested, that, though men called his worship heresy, it was worship consciously rendered to the true and everlasting God, — over the grave of the great iconoclast, who averred that he never shattered an image except to liberate a god.

There are other things, which the world cannot be expected to know, and will doubtless refuse to believe, — that he was full of frolic, wit, with his intimates, the most genial of companions, the sunniest of associates, the gentlest of counsellors, the kindest of judges, constant and tender as a woman in his affections. His intimate friends

could say things of him that would melt his enemies' hearts; and the day when the books shall be opened, and the witnesses shall be gathered, the stern prophet and lonely fighter for the truth in evil times will be led in, crowned with flowers, by the angels of little children. He who would only have the Beatitudes read over his grave shall have the benedictions of the pure in heart strewn over his memory.



"Their works do follow them."

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THE  
LIFE - WORK OF THEODORE PARKER ;  
A  
DISCOURSE

PREACHED

**At the M. E. Church, Warren Street, Roxbury, June 10, and repeated  
before the Literary Societies of the Methodist General Biblical  
Institute, Concord, N. H., June 13, 1860.**

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BY

REV. FALES HENRY NEWHALL.

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BOSTON :

J. M. HEWES, 81 CORNHILL.

SOLD BY J. P. MAGEE, 5 CORNHILL ; IN ROXBURY, BY JOHN BACKUP.

1860.

C

Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1860,

By JOHN M. HEWES, [S]

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

the stands now before his Maker, where he  
has the man, but the man's work that is

## DISCOURSE.

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1 Cor. 3: 13.

“THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN’S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS.”

A mighty voice is hushed, a mighty pen has ceased to move. A mind, which has sent forth from this centre great tides through the ocean of human thinking, has done its work, and the eddying waves go forth into coming ages. Great natural powers, carefully disciplined by the highest culture of New England, tireless industry in gathering the learning of all lands, and indomitable energy in making practical the thought of the heart, all have for the last twenty years been mainly devoted to a special work. What that work was, such a man’s life would sufficiently declare ; but we are not left to inference ; he himself informs us with great frankness and earnestness. He consecrated himself to it in his youth, and has left us the record of consecration.

I have not invited you hither this evening to listen to an analysis of Theodore Parker’s character—of that I shall say no more than is absolutely necessary to the right fulfilment of a more important and less invidious task—it is not the man, but the man’s work that the fire is to try. He stands now before his Maker, where you and I must stand so soon. I presume not to sit on the

Judge's throne—but "his works follow him;" they are all about us to-day; in them you and I and all mankind have a vital, practical interest. Of them I must speak pointedly and earnestly, to discharge the duty of a faithful Christian minister.

I have said that for the last twenty years Theodore Parker's energies have been mainly devoted to a special work. Through all the channels by which the public mind can be reached, as preacher, lecturer, writer,—first from a Unitarian pulpit at West Roxbury, then from the desk of the Melodeon and Music Hall—in political discourses,—in literary addresses before colleges and lyceums,—in essays and reviews,—with unwavering unity of purpose he bent his energies to this single work. And what was that work? He himself tells us clearly and frankly, as in a few days of leisure at Santa Cruz he reviews this long career, when he had laid by the armor and looked back over the field. I read from the letter written to his society, May 9, 1859, published under the title "Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister."

"I had not preached long before I found, as never before, that practically, the ecclesiastical worship of the Bible hindered the religious welfare and progress of the Christians more than any other cause . . . . With Protestant ministers, the Bible is a Fetish; it is so with Catholic priests, likewise, only to them the Roman Church is the Master-Fetish, the 'Big Thunder,' while the Bible is but an inferior and subservient idol. For ultimate authority, the minister does not appeal to God, manifesting himself in the world of matter and the world of man, but only to the Bible; to that he prostitutes his mind and conscience, heart and soul; on the authority of an anonymous Hebrew book, he will justify the slaughter of innocent men, women and children, by the thousand; and, on that of an anonymous Greek book, he will believe, or at least command others to believe, that man is born totally depraved, and God will perpetually slaughter men in



Hell by the million, though they had committed no fault, except that of not believing an absurd doctrine they had never heard of. Ministers take the Bible in the lump as divine ; all between the lids of the book is equally the ‘ Word of God,’ infallible, miraculous ; he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that believeth it not shall be damned ; no amount of Piety and Morality can make up for not believing this. No Doctor is ever so subordinate to his Drugs, no Lawyer lies so prone before Statute and Custom, as the mass of ministers before the Bible, the great Fetish of Protestant Christendom. The Ephesians did not so worship their great goddess Diana and the meteoric stone which fell from Jupiter. ‘ We can believe any thing,’ say they, which has a ‘ Thus saith the Lord ’ before or after it.’ The Bible is not only Master of the Soul, it is also a talisman to keep men from harm ; bodily contact with it, through hand or eye, is a part of religion ; so it lies in railroad stations, in the parlors and sleeping chambers of taverns, and the cabins of ships, only to be seen and touched, not read. The pious mother puts it in the trunk of her prodigal son, about to travel, and while she knows he is wasting her substance upon harlots and in riotous living, she contents herself with the thought that ‘ he has got his Bible with him, and promised to read a chapter every day ! ’ So the Catholic mother uses an image of the ‘ Virgin Mother of God,’ and the Rocky Mountain savage a bundle of grass ; it is a Fetish . . . . I had not been long a minister, before I found this worship of the Bible as a Fetish, hindering me at each progressive step. If I wished to teach the nobleness of man, the Old Testament and New were there with dreadful condemnations of human nature ; did I speak of God’s love for all men, the Bible was full of ghastly things—Chosen People, Hell, Devil, Damnation—to prove that he loved only a few, and them not over much ; did I encourage free individuality of souls, such as the great Bible-men themselves had, asking all to be Christians as Jesus was a Christ, there were texts of bondage, commanding a belief in this or that absurdity. There was no virtue, but the Scriptures could furnish an argument against it. I could not deny the existence of ghosts and witches, devils and demons, haunting the earth, but revelation could be quoted against me. Nay, if I declared the Constancy of Nature’s Laws, and sought therein great argument for the Constancy of God, all the miracles came and held their mythologic finger up . . . I set myself seriously to consider how I could best oppose this monstrous evil.” pp. 60–64.

“ While Christians accept the Bible as the ‘ Word of God,’ direct, miraculous, infallible, containing a complete and perfect ‘ revelation ’ of His (God’s) Nature, His Character and Conduct, it is quite impossible for them to accept, or even tolerate the Infinite Perfection of God.” p. 79.

“ But I have preached against the Errors of Ecclesiastic Theology more than upon any other form of wrong, for they are the most fatal mischiefs in the land. The theological notion of God, Man, and the Relation between them, seems to me the greatest speculative error Mankind has fallen into. Its gloomy consequences appear :—Christendom takes the Bible for God’s word, His last word . . . From portions of this ‘ infallible revelation,’ the Roman church *logically*\* derives its despotic and hideous claim to bind and loose on earth, to honor dead men with sainthood, and to rack and burn with all the engines mechanic fancy can invent . . . Hence both Protestant and Catholic *logically*\* derive their imperfect, wrathful Deity who creates men to torment them when in an endless hell, ‘ paved with skulls of infants not a span long,’ whereunto the vast majority of men are, by the million trodden down for everlasting agony, at which the Elect continually rejoice . . . Hence the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Mormons draw their idea of woman . . . There the slaveholder finds the chief argument for his ownership of men, and in Africa or New England, kidnaps the weak, his mouth drooling with texts from the ‘ authentic Word of God ; ’ ” &c., &c. pp. 141–143.

“ *Bible worship*,” then, as he calls it ; *deference to the divine authority of the Bible* as we should call it, he deemed the great hindrance to Reform in America and Protestant Christendom. He proceeds to tell us in these pages, how the chief labors, studies and struggles of his life have been devoted to crush this Foe of Human Progress. He relates how the Unitarians “ cast him out ” in consequence, how no Christian sect would endorse him, and how his friends set up for him an independent pulpit, where he girded himself for what he styles

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\* I italicise the word—it shows that Mr. Parker believed that these abominable doctrines and practices were really sanctioned by the Bible.

a “thirty years war.” All his other work, he gives us clearly to understand, was secondary and subsidiary to this. It is necessary, of course, then, for me to ask your chief attention to what he deemed the chief work of his life.

As he flung himself against the citadel of Scripture authority, he regarded himself as the single-handed champion of free thought and free speech in matters of religion—he advanced like the leader of a forlorn hope, expecting to die in the trench, but feeling sure that others would rush in after him and demolish the Sevastapol of Protestant superstition. His words in behalf of free thought are noble and inspiring. He rained thunderbolts upon that blind and foolish Conservatism, which would repress the free discussion of truth, and fetter the tongue or the pen. “If the Christian Church or the Christian Scriptures can be toppled down by the earthquake throbs of free discussion, let them fall, said Mr. Parker, and so say we. If a man fears to have the rains descend, the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon his house, we know that it is because he fears that his house is not built upon the eternal rock.

The Bible is not to be taken as the “Word of God” because it claims to be; any book might claim to be; nor because men say it is, men might say this of any book. I find no fault with Mr. Parker for refusing to accept the Bible as divine on the dictum of any man or men, any sect or sects—I complain not of his subjecting its claims to the most rigid and relentless scrutiny, refusing to believe what he could not see out of his own eyes, declaring that no other man should cut out a creed for him, but that by the free use of his own faculties, mental and moral, he would stand or fall. All this is

manly, it is every man's duty; I would that he could have taught it to all mankind. More than this, if I could see that by an honest, earnest use of all his intellectual and moral powers he had come to the deliberate conclusion that the Bible is not divine, I could not say one word in his condemnation—true, his convictions would not be mine, they would not lead me to throw up the testimony of my own reason, conscience and consciousness; because a man by my side looks straight into the sky at mid-day and solemnly declares that there is no sun there, I shall not give up using and believing my own eyes—but I would admit Mr. Parker's denial under such circumstances as a strong mysterious *objection*, of which I should frankly say, "*I cannot solve it.*" But this strange career just closed leaves us in no such dilemma, for this simple reason—he tells us himself in this letter, *that his mind was virtually made up on this subject, before he began to thoroughly investigate it.* Now a strong mind, when it has once laid hold of truth or error, clings to it with tenacity proportionate to its own vigor, and if not evenly balanced, or not evenly cultivated, may be permanently wedded to monstrous error. History is full of the errors of great men. The wonderful Pascal tormented himself with the ascetic's iron belt; Johnson believed in the ghost of Cock Lane; Cotton Mather hung witches; even Bacon himself clung to errors in doctrine and practice that hindered the march of improvement; he rejected or disregarded the discoveries of Galileo and Copernicus.\*

Mr. Parker tells us, that before he began his theological studies, his mind was settled in regard to several fundamental religious doctrines, doctrines so fundamental as to involve the whole question of the reception or rejection

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\* Descrip. of the Intellect. Globe, chap. 6.



tion of the Bible as the "Word of God." At his seventh year he had settled it as a permanent conviction that God was never to be feared ; soon after this he had disposed of the doctrine of the Trinity, and some time before he began his critical investigation of the Scripture, he had fully decided that there was no such thing as infallible inspiration, and that at least *some* of the *miracles* of Scripture were "clearly impossible, others ridiculous, a few were wicked." With these *settled convictions* he began his proper theological studies. "I *entered* on my theological education with many ill-defined doubts, and *some distinct denials* of the Ecclesiastical theology of Christendom.\*" By his own statement then, when he began his critical study of the Bible, to see if it is what Christendom claims that it is, the "Word of God," he had already fully made up his mind that it was not the "Word of God," for he was satisfied that it contained false doctrines, ridiculous absurdities, and *some* wickedness. It is true that after this he studied immensely, devoured libraries, acquired many languages, roamed all the fields of literature, swallowed whole systems of philosophy, travelled extensively, and gleaned rich harvests from broad observation ; but in all this reading, study and observation he but gathered material to build an edifice already planned, he only borrowed weapons to wage a warfare already resolved upon. His life-work was to demolish the Protestant reverence for the Bible, and from his seventh year it was virtually settled in his mind that it was not the "*Word of God.*" He had made up his mind what doctrines of God and man ought to be in the Bible ; and then his critical studies were

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\* Experience as a Minister, pp. 35, 36 ; the italics are mine.

devoted to examining whether a fair criticism would find there the doctrines he believed, and eliminate the doctrines he hated ; that is, he came to the Bible assuming that he was competent to make a Bible for himself.

This avowed prepossession of early life is the key-note to his whole history, as inordinate self-reliance is the key-note to his whole character. Think of this child of seven years settling questions over which doctors and councils had pondered and prayed ! grown already so much wiser than the hoary patriarch, who declared “ *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ;*” and think of the man, having almost reached the half-century milestone, pointing back to that theological prodigy with self-satisfaction ! I should not thus pointedly call attention to this trait of his character were it not the central standpoint from which to view his whole theology. He is the most dogmatic theological writer that I have ever read in the English language. Of him might be repeated what one of Macaulay’s friends said of him,—“ He is the most reckless asserter I ever knew ; I wish that I could be as sure of any thing as Tom Macaulay is of every thing.”

For example ; God, in his theology, was what he conceived God ought to be. He learned from Kant to make the idea of God a necessity of human nature, but he went farther and called it an “ Intuition,” a “ fact of consciousness.” He went much farther, and declared *his* idea of God to be an “ instinctive intuition.” Now his idea of God, was, he confessed, very different from that of Moses, Isaiah and Paul, but their ideas were “ low and imperfect,” they believed in a “ finite ferocious God ”—very different from that of the Christian world, Greek, Catholic, or Protestant, but the mass of Christians he stigmatized as idolaters—the Orthodox worshipped a

Moloch, a “Draco of the Universe”—the Heterodox worshipped they knew not what, yet *his* was the only true God.\* But all this would be modest ; this was simply all Christendom on one side and Mr. Parker on the other—all Christendom wrong and Mr. Parker right. But he went far beyond this, and declared that every other man had an “instinctive intuition” of the God that he believed in, *his* idea was a universal intuition, while all others were the offspring of sense or tradition ; that is, he stands up in the face of the whole Christian world and not only tells them what *he* sees, but in spite of their universal protest, insists upon telling them what *they* see also !

Human Immortality, too, he declares to be an “Intuition.” Man himself *sees* that he is immortal, and needs no revelation to assure him. In vain do Plato and Cicero lift their tall heads through the hoar of ages, and shout to him from afar that they have no such “intuition ;” that they grope helplessly in the dark, seeking for the strong staff of some divine revelation ;† in vain do Christian philosophers, Catholic and Protestant, cry out on every side that they have no such intuition ; even his friend Emerson, at his very elbow, assures him that he has no such intuition, and that he expects to live after death only as he lived a thousand years before he was born—but Mr. Parker brow-beats them all with the assertion that they all *do* believe, by “instinctive intuition,” in personal immortality.

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\* It is most melancholy to see Mr. Parker’s gross ignorance or gross misrepresentation of the doctrines and preaching of the Church of our day ; *e. g.*, he says, “The God of the popular theology retails agony and *damns babies, paving his spacious hell with skulls of infants not a span long.*” (Sermons of Theism, p. 279, preached in 1852.) Even the charity that believeth, hopeth, and endureth *all things*, must brand this accusation as atrocious.

† Comp. Platon. Phædo, 99. D. Alcibiades II. 150. D. Rep. Lib. VI. 499. B. (Ed. Stalb.) Cic. Tusc. Quæst. I.

He utters such ringing sentences in behalf of free thought, that you think if you let him take you by the arm to lead you through the domains of theology, you may roam at will over hill and plain, filling your lungs with fresh oxygen at every breath ; but the moment you start with him, he slyly cramps your chest in the double corsets of his “ *intuitions* ” and presumptions, and then leads you along two or three straight turnpikes that he has laid out through the landscape !

I now proceed to show how Mr. Parker attacked the divinity of the Scriptures. The plan of attack and the weapons are mainly taken from De Wette. His great weapons were *opinions* formed from philosophical speculation. These opinions, dogmas or presumptions, he calls upon us to accept as axioms in theology.

(1.) Concerning God. God never has, never does, never will, never *can* work a miracle. “ A theological miracle is as *impossible* as a round triangle.” Of course, it results then from this, as a corollary, that there is no such thing as inspiration, or revelation in the Christian sense, for this would be a miracle, knowledge from a supernatural source. All the religions of the earth, true and false, have been invented by man.

(2.) Concerning Man. Man commenced existence on this planet as a naked savage, just above the brute, and has been steadily *progressing* from that condition to the state in which we now behold him. He is able to work out his own destiny, by use of his own faculties, without supernatural assistance. So he will continue to progress, till he reaches that distant millenium, where Mr. Parker’s God, The Absolute, will be the God, and Mr. Parker’s religion the religion of the whole human race.



(3.) Concerning the relation of God to Man. Man, as we find him, is what God meant he should be.

I shall first show how he used these dogmas in his attack on the Bible, and second, examine the dogmas themselves.

I. If a man comes to the Scripture fully accepting these dogmas as axioms, it is self-evident that he will look upon the Bible as a mass of absurdity, falsehood and wickedness. Moses gives us an account of creation. "Moses never could have known any thing about the creation," says Mr. Parker, "he did not see it, and no other man saw it to tell him, or to hand the tradition to him." Mr. Parker says emphatically, "no man can tell when, where, or how, the human race ever came into existence." But Moses says, "Thus said the Lord unto me ;" "Moses lies," says Mr. Parker, "or was deceived," and so in either case his veracity, as a historian, is annihilated. So the whole Pentateuch is disposed of in a lump. It is true, he brings to the investigation of these books much learned criticism, gleaned from many languages, ancient and modern ; scientific, linguistic, archæologic discoveries ; classic rabbinic, talmudic lore ; but all his learning moves in the narrow space between the leading strings of the first two dogmas ; "*no miracles*" is on the one side, and "*indefinite human progress*" on the other.

Yet he often insinuates reasons for his conclusions drawn from history, verbal criticism, &c., when, if the reader will turn back to the Introduction, he will discover that none of these are honest reasons ; the real reason he will find in an assumption there. *E. g.*, he tells the reader, dogmatically, that the *style* of the book of Deuteronomy proves it to have been written a thousand years after the age of Moses, and after some of the Jew-

ish captivities. Now this seems to be a critical reason, drawn from some special phraseology or the like ; but on examination we find that the style of portions of that book is too high to comport with his assumption of human progress ; but chiefly, those very captivities are there predicted, and the prediction he must suppose to have been written after the event, or admit the miracle of prophecy. So following De Wette, he moves certain chapters of Deuteronomy a thousand years away from other chapters under the same author's name, and which he admits Moses wrote. The unwary would be led to believe that some mysterious, learned research of Mr. Parker's had made this havoc in the Pentateuch, when, in reality, it is these assumptions of his which blow the work into fragments scattered centuries apart !

Thus every book of Scripture is criticised. Here are whole chapters of Isaiah which plainly predict deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, chapters of Daniel which predict the conquests of Alexander, and crimes of Antiochus Epiphanes ; this is to Mr. Parker proof positive that these prophecies were written after the events prophesied, and he calls upon the reader to believe, *on this evidence*, that some lying scribes tampered with the works of Isaiah and Daniel, and added these chapters ages after these prophets were buried. He dogmatically states that the New Testament narratives are writings of "very low historic credibility," stuffed full of fables and legends. As we read the statement, we imagine that Mr. Parker has found somewhere a whole magazine of new weapons with which to assail the New Testament history. We read on and are surprised to find that he has not discovered one new objection. He decides the New Testament history to be unworthy of credit simply

because it contains accounts of miracles ;—before opening the book, as a critic, he had settled it as a fact that God never wrought a miracle. It is a great mistake, then, to imagine that it requires any great learning or research to meet Mr. Parker's fundamental objections to the authority of the Scriptures. The whole subject, which might seem so vast and complicated, is narrowed down to the question whether the reader is prepared to admit Mr. Parker's preliminary assumptions.

In these assumptions he follows a school of German Rationalists, whose leader is already a forgotten man in Germany, and in his other objections there is nothing original. It is a significant fact that Mr. Parker has spent twenty years in laboring, as he expresses it, to pull down this Fetish which Protestants worship, that is, to annihilate the faith which Christendom has in Scripture ; but in all this warfare has not been able to lay his hand on one new weapon. I repeat it, I am, after careful study, unable to find that Mr. Parker has originated one objection to any portion of Scripture. All his objections have been presented before, and a great many of them presented and disposed of ages before he was born. It is sad to see what pains he took to collect arguments against the authority of Scripture. He roamed through all the fields of literature, to distil the poison of infidelity from every noxious weed, he spread his drag-net over the foul marshes of German Rationalism, he stirred in his caldron the mistakes, misstatements, scoffs and sneers of the infidelity of all ages, and gave the sediment of the abominable mixture to the American public ;\* but he originated nothing. He can claim the honor of concentrating the virus from poisons furnished him by Heathens, Jews, Mahommedans and

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\* Disc. of Religion, *passim* ; Sermons of Theism, Introd.

Infidels, of various lands and ages, to slay the authority of this Book ; but this is all the glory he can claim. Of all these old objections it is enough to say, the Bible has triumphed over all of them once, and will do so still. Gibraltar will never be taken unless attacked with heavier metal and deadlier weapons than have ever assailed it yet, especially when it is stronger now than ever before.

II. Thus much for these subsidiary objections. Let us now look at these dogmas which De Wette taught him, which are his real weapons.

(1.) "A theological miracle is as impossible as a round triangle," says Mr. Parker. This assumes altogether too intimate an acquaintance with the Almighty. "*Impossible*" he says ; has God ever told him just how much he can do ? Or has Mr. Parker calculated or measured God's power to a mathematical nicety, so that he is competent to tell the world just what he can and what he cannot do, as the newspapers tell just how much Dr. Windship can lift ? He called God the Creator ;\* was not creation a miracle ? One moment man was not, the next moment man was. Is not this a miracle ? And if there has been one miracle on this planet, may there not have been a thousand ? Special answers to prayer he would have deemed miraculous, and, therefore, he disbelieved in prayer as it is taught in the Bible. He was not a man of prayer. Let me be understood ; he believed in and practised *adoration*, but he did not believe in *prayer*.† He did not think that he or any other man ever *need* to pray. You find no exhortations to prayer in his dis-

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\* Yet he often verges towards the edge of Pantheism, and once or twice seems to call creation a development.

† "We cannot say that God is moved by special prayer of John or James ; these human limitations are no more to be ascribed to God than the form of Reindeer or the shrewdness of Beaver." (Disc. of Rel. p. 167.)



courses ; he could not, consistently, exhort men to pray. Think of it ! God never hears, never did hear, never can hear prayer ! All this agony of fervent supplication, all these mighty wrestlings with the Infinite, of which the great and good of all ages tell us, all were but childish delusion ! Abraham prayed, Moses prayed, David prayed, Paul prayed, Luther prayed, Newton prayed, Edwards prayed, Jesus Christ prayed. Shall I say it ? it is dreadful—but I must, Mr. Parker looks down on them all with a pitying smile, “ poor, weak mortals, not advanced far enough in philosophy to see that God never hears, never can hear prayer ! ” But what a dreary universe is this where adamantine laws go crashing round eternally in iron grooves, and no God hears his children cry ! and what a dreary, dreadful God is this who would so make man that the choicest of his children would be thrilled with heavenly raptures by believing a lie ! a God sitting apart, afar, aloft, serene and cold, never melting at a human tear ! Tell me, is this Deity set up in Music Hall, the God that is to steal the hearts of men and women from the God of the Bible, who, “ like as a father pitieth his children, pitieth them that fear him ; ” who watches the sparrow that falls, and asks us, “ If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask Him ? ”

(2.) Human sufficiency and Progress. This is really the first assumption in another shape. I might object to this on grounds philosophical and historical, and I think conclusively disprove it, but I confine myself to the subject in its strictly religious aspect. “ Man,” says he, “ has invented all the religions of the earth, true and

false; they are the natural growths of progressive human nature in various ages. Now, notwithstanding all his assaults on the divinity of the Bible, he admits that it is much the best religious book in the world, and the Christian much the best religion. Now if this assumption be true, how does it come to pass that mankind came to a dead halt in religious progress nearly two thousand years ago? Mr. Parker himself is forced to point *back* to Christ as the summit of human progress! Through these eighteen centuries and a half, he tells us, mankind have been on the steady march, physically, intellectually and religiously. Now they have invented new arts, new weapons, new tools, new machines, new languages, new governments, new philosophies,—they have discovered new kingdoms in nature, laid out new highways through the universe; why have they not invented or discovered a new Bible and a new religion? Why must the apostles of Progress themselves point *backward* all these ages to the highest type of religion in a Character, in a Book and in a System? Mr. Parker felt the pressure of the question; he saw that it annihilated his whole system, if unanswered, and therefore he undertook the tremendous task of sketching the outline of a new religion, which he called “the Absolute.” “The world is not ripe for it yet,” said he, “it is the Religion of the Future.” Alas! on what authority are we to accept “the Absolute,” as he presents it? On the authority of Mr. Parker’s *intuitions*. He draws the sword, and has been wielding it these twenty years to deliver the world from the dictum of the Bible, and gives us instead the dictum of his intuitions! Now if a dictum is to decide this matter, allow me to prefer the dictum of Jesus of Nazareth to the dictum of Theodore of Boston.

(3.) Man is acceptable to God; the doctrine that God is ever angry with men, ever forgives sin, is a theological fable. Now if man is perfectly acceptable to the all holy God, certainly he ought to be to Mr. Parker. If God is never angry with man, because of his sins, certainly *he* ought never to have been. Man, by his theory, on gory battle-fields, from jails, gibbets and brothels, is still "on his way to all that is good and pure," is literally "working out his own salvation."

Why, then, did Mr. Parker lash himself into rage to attack the sins of rumsellers, kidnappers, slave-holders, slave-breeders; why make the rostrum ring and the press blaze with denunciations of these brethren of his who were simply "working out their own salvation," and "on their way to all that is good and pure?" If God is satisfied, why should not he be? Why should he be squeamish and fastidious about selling babies by the pound, and burning up an inebriate's vitals with "liquid damnation," if the Judge of all the earth looks down well-pleased? In fine, when Mr. Parker tells us what he really believes about man's nature and condition, all these lightnings of his indignation at the Fugitive Slave Bill, Kansas outrages, kidnapping of Burns and Sims, change into the coruscations of harmless fire-works; there is the whizzing of wet powder, and the dropping of a stick.

Yet, I doubt not for a moment Mr. Parker's sincerity, in his tremendous invectives against these abominable sins. Like many other men, his feelings and acts directly contradict his speculations; he hated these sins with righteous hatred, and fought them valiantly, although giving the lie to his theology at every word and blow. Many a man's life is better than his speculations, yet his speculations may ruin thousands. The poison of

error may take one generation to show its fatal virus. An eminent Unitarian clergyman\* claims that Mr. Parker is the legitimate child of Unitarianism, yet how would Channing have abhorred the Parkerism of to-day !

It will sound strange to some, to say that this bold champion of free thought promulgated a theological theory, which bound the human mind as helplessly as it was ever fettered by the most rigid predestinarian, or the sternest fatalist. Yet it is even so. He taught that God had so made man that man would *necessarily* fulfil God's purposes, that man could not resist God's will ; sin, by his theory, is impossible. God's resistless *power* and *goodness*, he taught, ensure the final happiness of every human being. If man cannot sin, if he *must* be happy, then he is not free. This theology speaks of God's power exerted upon human souls, as if they were made of wood or stone, and could be moulded like dead material. It looks on the whole human race like a vast factory, planned to weave a fabric of a certain pattern, where the looms and spindles are human thoughts and wills, and God's power the resistless driving wheel. Man thus becomes a mere cog on a wheel of the Machine of the Universe.

As Mr. Parker denies all revelation, except in that accommodated sense in which Cosmos and the Principia may be called revelations, what account has he to give of the deep craving of this human child to hear from its Father, the long prayer for light that rolls up from all the literature of the heathens ? He throws our Bible down among the Shasters and the Vedas, and what does he give us instead ? He puts out the lights that God has kindled, and what torch has he to give us ? How we

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\* Rev. James Freeman Clarke.



came here we know not ; he tells us we cannot know ; whither we are going we know not, only so far as our eyes can see ! No light from beyond, no prayer-hearing God ; a cold, inflexible, Absolute compressing us in its icy arms ; but no Father to hold our infant hand as we totter on in the first steps of this myterious being ! A plan of salvation ? Man needs none, he must save himself, if saved at all. Forgiveness ? It is an impossibility ; there is none in the universe. There is no help or hope for a being who has violated law, but to work out the penalty ; no mercy in God's government ! The Cross, whose light and heat stream through human history ; in whose radiance we thread safely the labyrinths of Providence, or at least see how we may one day do so ; the Cross toward which, in all lands, human hearts turn and open as flowers to the sun ; the Cross is dragged down, and what is reared in its place ? Nothing. Parkerism tells us we need nothing. God never spoke to the race. He never commissioned prophet, apostle, or Redeemer to reveal his will. Not a word of sympathy for the suffering race has ever dropped from the brazen heavens. We behold the noblest of the sons of men straining their eyes and ears, to catch a gleam, to hear a sound from the other world, and Mr. Parker looks on and sneers at their weakness ! Plato said : “ We must wait patiently until some one, either a God, or some inspired man, teach us our moral and religious duties, and, as Pallas, in Homer, did to Diomed, remove the darkness from our eyes.” And again, expresses the strange mysterious hope, that “ there had existed in the immense past some people who had possession of a true philosophy *by divine inspiration*, (ἐκ τινος θείας ἐπιπνοίας ἀληθινὴ Φιλοσοφία,) or that they might perhaps now exist

*in some obscure part of the barbarian land,"* but Mr. Parker looks with serene indifference upon the gift for which Plato longed. All these glimmering traditions of primitive revelation, whose scattered embers the noblest of the heathen sages gathered together from far lands, with painful toil, and blew for a little light, and over the feeble sparks shouted, crying, "Ha! I have seen the fire," this apostle of Absolute religion spurns with his foot as lying legends or childish superstitions. Absolute religion—that which every man can discover for himself—this is all we have or can have; and he is weak in the head or diseased in the heart who asks for any thing more. Who is this that so comfortably draws infallible conclusions where Plato and Cicero failed, and cried for aid in despair? Who is this that enters the sacred cell of Socrates, and as the child-like sage sits on the bedside, with his disciples at his feet, listening tearful and breathless, while the sun yet lingers on the mountains, as he gives them the reason of the hope that is in him, by weaving together the vague and distorted traditions of primitive revelations, singing them as a swan-song, to keep his heart strong in that fearful hour—who is this that enters and sneers at the scene that is graven on the heart of the world? Let it change our indignation to pity, as we see that it is he who "drops a tear for the weakness" of Jesus Christ!\*

But with all these errors, he aimed mighty blows at the popular sins of our age. He attacked sins that had grown venerable, that were intrenched in the government, trade, commerce, politics, literature, public opinion, and, alas! in the church of our age; he attacked them with fervid eloquence, invincible logic and

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\* See Methodist Quarterly Review for July, 1859, p. 453.

irrefragible facts. Especially he fought persistently the pet sin of the American people—negro slavery. How sad will be that page of the history of the American Church, that will tell how on the sultry cotton-field, and in the pestilent rice-swamp, many a perishing son of toil sought for the star of Bethlehem above the Melodeon and the Music Hall! But, alas! in drawing his bow upon these sins, he shot his arrows through the most vital interests of humanity. While lopping off boughs, here and there, from the great Upas of human sin, he yet watered the roots of the same accursed tree. He lifted the axe against the branches with bold and sturdy stroke, yet plied the spade about the roots.

In three modes he seriously hindered reform in America. (1.) He shook man's faith in *prayer*, which alone can keep the heart of the reformer cheerful, sweet and strong.\* (2.) He shook man's faith in the *Bible*, from which all modern reforms have rolled. (3.) He weakened man's sense of *sin*, furnishing men with a ready-made apology for the crimes against which he fought, drugging the conscience with the opiates of his theology, while he struck at it with the goad of his ethics. While he spoke one sharp word against a special sin, he spoke ten against the possibility of any sin. His theology kills the air, so that true reform cannot live there. And we are to remember that he never forgot that he was a *preacher*, a preacher of a religion which he expected would supplant the Christianity of the New Testament. He ever kept his mark in view, and whatever he might transfix on the way, the arrow was aimed at Bible Chris-

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\* Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favor, gathereth a force and a faith which human nature in itself could not obtain.—*Bacon's Essay on Atheism.*

tianity. When we see, then, that fundamental error permeated and poisoned all his work, notwithstanding the courage and even sublime fury of his assault on mighty sins, we are forced to regard his career, on the whole, as a backward eddy in the great on-sweeping current of human reform.

The fire is trying, and shall try his work. It will melt away mountains of dross, but it will leave, here and there, jewels and gold. Here was a giant who flung himself against the Bible ; he had better have dashed his body against a rock of adamant ; yet he will do the truth good service in the end, for he will help to demonstrate that it is invincible. The great work of his life is a failure, it will not follow him far, it staggers already, shot through with arrows from 'Truth's quiver ; but his minor works, wrought by the way, shall follow his memory forever. Bible truth will stand on a firmer basis in human conscience and consciousness because of his assault, though, alas ! for this he can claim no reward ; while now that that arm lies nerveless and that restless brain moulders beneath the classic soil of Italy, many a tear will drop for him in humble homes which his charity has blessed ; many a respectable sinner will breathe more freely, as he thinks that that bow is unstrung whence sped those galling shafts ; many a fugitive, fleeing with his life in his hand and his eye on the star, will feel his heart sink as he marks the light grow dim ; for a bright ray is quenched out of that polar star ; and many an humble Christian will fervently pray against that life-work of his that soon shall die, while he will rejoice and be glad in the way-side works that shall never die, the works that forever shall follow Theodore Parker.



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# DISCOURSE,

PREACHED IN THE WEST CHURCH,

ON

THEODORE PARKER.

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BY C. A. BARTOL.

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## DISCOURSE.

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1 Sam. xix. 23, 24: "AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD WAS UPON HIM ALSO. WHEREFORE THEY SAY, IS SAUL ALSO AMONG THE PROPHETS?"

PERUSING some speeches and discourses lately, I thought how funeral solemnities, obituary notices, and orations over the dead, show the cheapness of eulogy. Praise is easy, very easy at the tomb. The Latin has become an English proverb, to say nothing but good of those that are gone. Is this from a fine instinct, that evil is a passing cloud? Is our praise a tribute to the common soul in all men? Or, as censure is found alike easy for those who have differed from us, is it because it requires so little elevation in ourselves to commend our favorites? Not presuming to decide such questions, and not expecting, amid jarring clamors of approbation and detraction, to satisfy any party, in what I shall speak of Theodore Parker I shall but take this for my maxim, that death does not alter truth; while, to whoever in surprise at my topic may, with the old incredulity, ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" I answer, "Yes." Though our

modern Saul, like the ancient one, did not go through the regular course, was touched at times with unhappy frenzy, and came to an untimely end, as of falling on his own sword, yet he was of uncommon stature, chosen by the Lord for a king, possessed with the Spirit, mighty to rout the Philistines, and, with whatever drawbacks on his virtue, deserving commemoration for an overplus of good.

May I say, that any disinclination I might feel to a subject involving violent oppositions of opinion is removed by the singular felicity of my relations to the person of whom I speak? We were fellow-students in the theological school. How well I remember the characteristic eagerness of the mate beside whom I had my place in what were called the Friday-evening debates! While listening to an argument to which he meant to reply, he would sit still, with suppressed feeling, tying knots in his handkerchief for points he proposed to make; and I have often thought the dint of that scourge as of small cords might be recognized now in all the hypocrisies of church and state on which he afterwards laid the lash. How vivid an image, from the aspiring, affectionate workings of the face he turned toward me, is still in my mind! Leaving Cambridge, he expressed his regret that my absence prevented my giving him the right hand of fellowship at his ordination in West Roxbury. When



he broke with the church to the extent of branding the miracles of Jesus recorded in the New Testament as absurd and incredible tales, and the Master himself as no authority in religion, and I frankly told him I could not, by asking an exchange of pulpits, force upon unwilling hearers one whom they held, however personally Christian, not a teacher of Christianity, he received the intimation fraternally as it was given, with no change of goodwill. However the account might stand between his boldness and my scrupulosity, there was no breath but of balmy air. Cordial greetings, visits and intercourse, never ceased. When once I said to him, in the midst of his library, "You have not pursued your ancestor's military calling," — "Have I not, indeed?" was the arch reply, signifying the fighting he had done. "Do not work too hard, and wear yourself out before the time," I exhorted him. "I am good for more than the seventy years," he answered, with the same confidence in his longevity he had in all his conclusions, prospects, and deeds. In a letter acknowledging my call on him in his sickness, he touched my heart and shamed my poorer memory by going back to minute circumstances through nearly twenty-seven years; in all which, he assured me, I had done or said or looked to him nothing unkind. Certainly I can recall no hard tone, no cold or averted countenance,

on his part; though seeing not seldom the compression of mouth with which the stout dogmatist, as we talked, affirmed his loyalty to the motto on his seal, "Moved neither by the billow nor the blast," — *Nec fluctu, nec flatu motus*. Well I noted the shy courtesy, the shrinking manner that covered at first a boundless craving, and was to open into such audacious courage. But his tenderness never hardened, or could be more than hid. On the eve of his departure, pale and wasted, in pursuit of health, in trembling tones and with flowing tears, he owned an affection never darkened by variance of our judgments, or chilled in the divergence of our paths. From abroad, repeated messages came from him of a reciprocal love, or appreciation of hearty esteem, by which all criticism, save that of conviction and duty, must be disarmed. Indeed, no self-reference, but a desire to throw light on the temper of an historic person, my own former companion, prompts this recital. "No man in New England has been hated as I have," he once in my house bitterly remarked. "No man ever carried away so much love from the country," he pathetically exclaimed to me again, in his own house, when just ready for the voyage which bore him to other shores on earth and the eternal one of heaven.

It does not appear strange, that one who could

care for a not intimate acquaintance, and virtual opponent of his views, should have clasped his nearest sympathizers to a beating breast. The quality of his friends is his own royal encomium. Let them be his testimonial! Their nobility is the best demonstration of his. His moulding of their character was not an effect without a cause. Was he blameless to his foes? This inquiry is, for every human creature, the searching test. It is easy to love those who love us. What signifies it to have our heart warm to such as foster, defend, flatter us, join our party, fight for us, furnish us opportunity to speak, and offer us that invisible incense — sweeter than any that smokes from swinging censers in great cathedrals — which comes out of hearkening ears? We are only up to publicans and sinners, when none but those who cherish us are dear. With no readiness to accuse, and no sentiment but of regret and pain, I am compelled to say, Theodore Parker here was not without fault. He reached not the perfect Christian spirit. Yet his dislikes were more from constitutional intensity than wilful wrong. He was a Puritan of the Puritans, while a Rationalist too. He was a Cromwellian, saying his prayers and keeping his powder dry. He was a son of liberty, and a worshipper of God after the way of his fathers. His putting a sword into the slave's right hand, and a Bible into the

left, was a genuine expression of his temper and creed. He was scholar and warrior in a room walled in with eighteen thousand volumes, and his grandfather's gun at the door. He was a remorseless examiner of Scripture creeds, yet a lover of literature; putting *the* Book always at the head. Having more in him than common people, he fell short of reconciling antagonist tendencies of his own mind. The atonement in him was not complete. The mystic was at odds in him with the logician. The pietist in the heart struggled with the duellist in the tongue. The embodied contradiction, which every man is, never ended for him in the incarnate harmony which stamps the likeness of some in so fine a photograph on the soul. He murmured, as he died, "There are two Theodore Parkers, — one here in Italy, one there in Boston." I think there were two Theodore Parkers within the circle of his own nature. Avoiding the blame which would cast out his name as evil, and the sycophancy that calls him the spotless paragon of the world; not denouncing his opposers as simpletons, or his favorers as knaves, — I must say, the honest man confounded justice with private and public details of quarrel, which he should have looked down upon as from the sun. This unhappiness arose from his main trouble in an excessive consciousness of himself. He stood fully aware of



his own claims, powers, and rights. He was the centre of his own circle. He had the disease of a sore personality.

Yet it would, however, be unfair to forget how much a boundless yearning for others' confidence was galled by what he took for groundless distrust, or how far his sensitive traits furnished him for his task; as it is impious not to remember, that the hand of God, fashioning every creature's frame, proved its carving in that peculiar face and brow. A different treatment of him, some have said, would have saved him to his religious brotherhood. But such a man, by fate or will divine, we were to have. Mutual irritation, as a foregone conclusion, could not be helped betwixt the conservatives and the hot reformer thwarting their prejudice, crossing their track, and scaring them from their ease. Conflict is inevitable in such a case. Hard blows, in words at least, will be given and received. The passions think themselves eternal; but nothing is more perishable, rave though they may, as if theirs were the endless tossings of the sea. How soon, in any noble mind, they go down! When, especially, Providence hangs up a portrait in that hall of Death which is the gallery of Time, what a new emotion affects our survey! Death does not alter truth; but it overcomes the excitement of individual dispute and sectarian rage of

taking sides. Thus another thought of the unique minister of the Twenty-eighth Congregation in Boston rises slowly on the minds of men from his vacant pulpit, from his dust on the Arno, and from his seat of higher light dissolving all human mistakes. We see the flames of his wrath subside under the unquenchable glow of his love for his companions and his self-consecration to human good. We ask how far the work he was called to depended on the perhaps to us disagreeable idiosyncrasies of his mood. We reflect how far weapons of indignation and scorn may seem lawful to one, who, however deceived, is persuaded he is in the right. Even the benignant Channing once cried out, in a conversation fresh in my thought, "Should any contempt of wrong be like the Christian's?" We hesitate harshly to reprove a born and professed fighter for the bruises he himself gets in the battle in which he deemed it necessary to engage. It is the worst misfortune of having adversaries, that they are apt to circumvent us with that very mischief of theirs against which we contend. If Hercules is not stung by the serpents he strangles, or rent and gored by the wild beasts he destroys, he may be consumed by the poisoned shirt he wears; yet nevertheless, for his labors to rid humanity of its pests, be a hero to all time. Mr. Parker, in his behavior translating the myth, was bent on apply-

ing his powers to annihilate what he regarded as malignant abuses in the way.

Practical philanthropy was his mark, of such nobleness in ways of quiet beneficence and public reform, that we must forgive him if ever his efforts were ill directed and vain. Men, as well as irrational creatures, sometimes scream when they cannot act, and buzz where they may not pass. Rarely did a stroke of his not draw blood as he meant. All the shams of society were to him unpardonable sins, of which he reckoned on his list more than did Jesus Christ, — sins he must fain fall upon without mercy or delay. He was more officer than judge. He felt there was a great deal of unapplied truth which he must engineer; and he worked deeply on the times that needed his heavy hammer and cutting edge. In a style pithy as Cobbett's or Dean Swift's, he fondly rendered his service. So, among the prophets of heaven, we must number also our American Saul. But he was a minor prophet, if narrow action be less than comprehensive sight. Yet few of the major ones of this period have left a signature so strong. Not an original seer, he would carry out the visions of other men. He was the sheriff of ideas, from them appointed to execute the doom which deeper councillors pronounced. He could not bear that the conclusions of learning or the perception of any spiritual reality should remain idle dreams, una-

vailable for the behoof and improvement of mankind. At all risks, he determined to put them into act. He would force all affairs to be amenable to their control; for want of gift freshly to discern, substituting a transcendent volume of knowledge, industry, and strength to perform. Truths which dropped soft as feathers from the lips of ideal men, became, by wondrous practical transformation, stiff and sharp as spears and riders' lances in his hands. Like Spenser's iron man Talus, he went out over the land; and whatever error or sin was disclosed to him could not hope to escape the flail. He was as one beholding vile buildings in some disreputable or inconvenient street, unworthy the space they fill, and urgent, alone or with a mob hustled together, to blow them up or burn them down, although it was not in him, by any plan of creative beauty, to build a temple in their stead.

His sternness in his public speech was no affectation; for, in his lowest tones in private, one noted something of the lion's roar. But the prey he followed was what he deemed the iniquity of the age. Whatever want of poetry, sentiment, or all-embracing wisdom, attended a mission so conceived, there was, at least, no paltering or compromise. He was not indisposed to be seen prominent himself in the rough utility: for an immense ambition, like a spur in his side, pushed him forward; and he labored with the



delight one always has in his proper vocation. He was aware how suited were his spiritual members to the function he undertook ; and in all encounters, however made, supposed he was “ about his Father’s business.” He often violated good taste in his manner and style, and no doubt lacked some of the sensibilities, piercing to the foundation of the mind, from which good taste proceeds. He seemed ever making up his mind and setting himself to some grandeur of accomplishment. He would have pleased delicate and bashful persons more, had the dramatic air been less evident in his life, which is slightly suggested by his directions in reference to his death. On account of his being so manifestly sensible of his mission, something of the grotesque disfigures his majestic though angular mould. He used the tone of a schoolmaster to some to whom it was ludicrously misapplied. He did not attain to the highest standard of a healthy, happy, simple, and peaceful man. A long fever was in his body and mind. He strained himself to unnatural degrees of aim and power. He throbbed with a double pulse. He toiled with a quadruple manhood. He dropped, a premature victim to the excesses of his soul. But we cannot spare our Saul out of our annals. He was a providential figure for our day. God sent him ; God put his Spirit upon him ; God had great use for him : and we must not be oblivious, that, if

he were hotly impassioned to an extreme, few more than he answer to the poet's line, —

“For thee my noblest passions burn.”

Those who know him as only love can make us know any one certify to the extraordinary overflow of his devotions, his remarkable gift in consolation, and ability to reconcile alienated or despairing spirits to the supreme government under which we live.

Indubitable witnesses to the womanly softness of the stern champion's heart should put, not only astonishment, but forgiveness, into bosoms aware toward him of any hate. We can denounce as he did: nothing is so smooth as the facility of censure. We are rather most concerned to find in his existence the blessing designed. Nor would I talk of him at all, but that, from the core, I feel this, too, was a man to be respected and loved. The signal merit, distorted with whatever blemish of unfairness, of his portraits of others, entitles him to a careful delineation of himself.

Doubtless, while grieving some with unbelief of their creeds, he raised multitudes all over the country, otherwise unreached by Orthodox and accredited views, to his own religious level. If he was belligerent, let the meek understand, that He who puts the red planet in the sky makes Mars ascendant in some minds. If, by an unadjusted contradiction in his

nature, some were at once attracted and repelled, his imperfection may have offered occasion of service to such as shared his disturbance while they missed his serenity. If he were in shape like a mighty engine rumbling through the highways, and then with much noise and commotion dragged back, rather than like the star shining softly and for ever to gladden all beholders, angels and men, without a sound, let us not, because there are heavenly bodies, refuse the benefit of engines, which indeed we cannot dispense with for any higher ministry of stars. If, on the ground of his temper, he cannot attain to any homogeneous and universally accepted credit, let us try to see him through a better medium than extravagant odium or a partisan fame.

I have spoken of Mr. Parker's moral habit. His special tenets are of less moment. It was remarkable how, immediately after his demise, his dispositions were universally from press and pulpit the subject of remark, while his opinions seemed buried in the ground or sunk in the sea. We over-estimate our special denominational creeds. Nobody will for mere belief of miracles be saved; or for unbelief of them be lost. Nobody will reach heaven by climbing on a heap of dogmas, but only by flying on wings of love. But hardly in any affectionate way did he attack the sins of society or the superstitions of the church. His theological heresies were the head

and front of his offending; but nobody was ever more ready to indict any by whom he was himself arraigned. He even charged on some, who thought he went too far, the secret treachery of opinions like his own, which they were ashamed to divulge, and afraid to enact. He hastily took their agreement with him for granted, without discrimination or sufficient proof. Those whom he suspected of disloyalty never pretended to hold to a plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, or the literal correctness of all wonderful stories in the Old Testament; but, while maintaining a divinity in psalm and prophecy and the Mosaic law, they affirmed a supernatural dispensation in the New Testament, which he used all his resources to flout.

In all sincerity he chose his career; but he had not faculty to penetrate the purport or appraise the contents of a religious tradition. He understood not, in its Christian application, the solidarity of a common sentiment, or the continuous and indissoluble unity of the human soul. He could do nothing with enduring institutions and operative principles in the life of mankind, but analyze and reduce them to ashes in the crucible of a speculative brain. He had not imagination, simple reverence, and holy wonder, to admit the marvels at which, on the road of investigation, the scientific understanding balks, but which are welcome to the higher reason in every artist and



true spiritualist, to poet and painter, to Dante and Shakspeare and Milton and Raphael, to genius of all sorts treading lowly on the mysterious borders, none ever measured, of the unseen world. A conscientious man, striving ever to a punctilio of equity to be just to all, he was yet in a wind so high, and so furious in his drift, as ungenerously to impute falsehood to brother-students dissenting from his word. Christianity to him was a system among other systems, to have sentence passed upon it by certain abstract categories of the intellect, instead of a vast, vital, organizing power, taking up the life of the age and the race into its endless century-growth, running across the land, flowing under the sea, like the fabled river, to infuse its sap into our ancestral blood, and make our very energies, and whatever parts we play well in the world, but offshoots from branches on the trunk or leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations. Not a profound philosopher, he yet had, of the value of metaphysical and partial generalizations against the make and providential movements of human nature, an overweening sense, from which issued a ready exaggeration of his own function. Contrary to Paul's pithy warning, he fancied he bore the root, and not the root him; though he is far from being alone or first to entertain this not very modest notion among remarkable men of our day.

Mistrusting his brethren's fidelity to their own con-

clusions, Mr. Parker took their serious construing of his position as persecution. He was contemplated by many, perhaps by all, of his friends, as a martyr. To the Association of Ministers to which he belonged was ascribed the crime of cruelty; and that Association has of late been publicly summoned to answer some questions he printed, as an arbitrary tribunal for them to answer at before all flesh, and to express regrets for their harsh handling of him. What did they do? They never expelled him; they never tried him. They subjected themselves to misconstruction as a band of infidels for avoiding in all ways any motion to his harm. To the unparalleled honor of their charity, it was impossible for them to lift a finger against his welfare. Theological self-preservation bound them not to make light of his revolutionary views, the adoption of which would have been their dissolution; while the resolute disputation they made built for him the pedestal of glory he stood upon for the hour, to which by no surpassing talents would he have ever been raised. In the tone of the debate, his brethren had the spiritual advantage. The severest language quotable from conversation or the press during the strife is his, not theirs. But corporations among us are weak against individuals, living or dead: especially bodies with the faintest ecclesiastic color must always expect the decree to go against them in a summary, Turkish way.

What was to be done in the case? Was Mr. Parker a teacher of Christianity? It is denounced as sheer venom or Pharisaism to say, No. But, verily, Mr. Parker did not profess to be a teacher of Christianity. He proclaimed absolute religion, in oversight of the fact, that a religion must be relative to the human mind; and that, of all religions ever known, this relativeness is in the Christian most beautiful and complete. Ignorant of his own sins, and imperceptive of the deepest needs of the human soul, he found in no gospel any emphatic design, saving power, or final authority. Disowning Jesus as a Master in spiritual things, though he would inconsistently allow Michael Angelo or Homer or Plato to be such in philosophy, poetry, and art; stigmatizing all approach to God through him as whining and whimpering through an attorney; and laughing at the pathetic symbol of the Lord's Supper, as the rattle that pleases or straw that tickles a child,—why should he have insisted on being counted among the preachers or disciples of Christ? He has been called an iconoclast; but iconoclasts commonly make their assault on temples from without: he raised his hand against the church inside. Ungracious seems all abatement of praise: but charity is not liar or fool; and I must affirm his position a false one, however the man was true. A respected clergyman in Boston a quarter of a century ago, withdrawing from

his post in unnecessary compunction for a legitimate interpretation of the table of communion to which his parishioners could not assent, presents a singular contrast with Mr. Parker's downright pertinacity to remain in the ecclesiastical fellowship, and force upon his ministerial brethren those more serious negations of the works which explode the historic image of the Son of God. He wanted, and only waited, to be expelled. "Drive me away, if you please," virtually said the politic man, who never lost his shrewdness in his heat; "make a victim of me. I will never go. On you be the obloquy of the hunt!" There is but a qualified magnanimity in such a stand. In recent panegyric, he is styled the only thoroughly faithful preacher of morals in the land. It is pity, in a world where neither sunlight nor the favor of God is shut up in a corner, a broad observation can discern goodness of any pattern in but a solitary point, when there are many men who would at once have won, as soon as he, an American and European notoriety and party leadership, could they have reasonably reached the inferences to which he so rashly leaped.

He did not shake the Church, though he rent somewhat the small section of it in which he lived. Allowing his transparent integrity, absolving him of all duplicity of intent, I claim for the family brotherhood he was of in religion a procedure as upright as



could arise from the strongest wish to adjust their fealty to the law of Heaven with the liberty of man ; and, fine as the liberty of man is, the law of Heaven is earlier and finer.

Not by our wits, but by the “inexorable logic of events,” as the divine providence marches on, is the debate, whether the gospel be a final lesson, to be closed. Meantime, the ablest critics of the Christian faith, from Porphyry and Julian to Voltaire and Hume and Paine, die at least in the era and reign of the wonderful person whose claims they discard. Our friend — of whose candid compliments to the great Jewish youth let us not be unmindful, inadequate as they appear — himself sickens in the realm of this head of the race, and will have the date of the Lord’s kingdom graven on his tomb. So will it be with us all. Every undertaking, with our critical apparatus, to overlook and measure the Master, fails. We cannot, on this mountain of the Lord, get high enough for its downward survey. From no wondrous balloon can we see it dwindle. The verdict, not of twelve, but twelve thousands of millions of men, is for him as Redeemer and Guide.

To the general substance of this award, who has a bill of exceptions he can succeed to file in ? It were as likely and beneficent an adventure to uncivilize as to unchristianize the human race. It were better to drop the chief comforts and useful inventions of life,

and turn all discovery back into barbarism, than to throw away the facts and precepts of the faith which has never become less new for being so old. So far as Mr. Parker's enterprise went to purge of accretions of error the popular and prevailing Christianity, let us thank him for a great contribution to human weal ; but where deficient insight, combined with inordinate egotism and intemperate zeal, tries, with poor surgery, to cut into its genuine members, let us shrink from all partnership in the at once profane and futile attempt. The attempt is not made from the legitimate point of any higher life, but from untenable, however industriously fortified, ground, such as the logical head has not seldom been too quick to offer against the human heart and soul. As a knight-errant of the order of Templars, let us welcome Mr. Parker, not as perfect saint or sage. He tore off the veil of error, but brightened not the countenance of truth. He cut down the poplars, but planted not the elms. He ripped away poisonous and tangled undergrowth, and ploughed a deep furrow, but sowed little wheat and corn. I know not for what thought I am in his debt. His heroic example is to all a precious legacy.

“ This, too, shall pass away,” was the inscription chosen for a human dwelling. I am profoundly convinced of its prophetic truth for that speciality of Mr. Parker's opinions, out of which, betwixt him and

others, came a grief in our day. It will not apply to any service he rendered, with such will and abundant endeavor, to the cause of freedom, education, temperance, natural piety, the relief of the perishing, and the comfort of the poor. But neither will it hold of the spiritual type he disdained, of supernatural glory in the revelation, in human flesh, of the Most High. That which, with massive but loose and inaccurate scholarship, he assailed, will endure while men and their schemes rise and sink. *Christian* is a living word in all earthly language, for which, in its magnificent, compound meaning, there can be no substitute. We may not arrogate it to ourselves; we may be slow to refuse it to others: but to despise it, in its actual sense is to renounce manhood, disown the Deity, and sin against the Holy Ghost.

Let us cling to it, untroubled by the disdain of sceptics, or by the sublime assumptions which any, wise and holy on a fond hypothesis, make of the worthlessness and folly of all, who, in matters of philosophy or society, differ from themselves. Let us not follow those, who, in a Christian era, under a notion of enlargement, chiefly wish to make Pagans of themselves. Let us believe in that spiritual world beyond, beneath, encompassing and pervading this, — not apparent to the senses or subject to the understanding, — which turns all our supercilious airs into the conceits of an empty soul, as, in the revelation

that has come to us, it shows itself most great and clear. No writing or history, indeed, can exhaust the mind of God. Not limiting the Infinite Spirit to any one manifestation, even Christianity, let us, however, emphasize justly whatever disclosure it vouchsafes. We need not, as do some, fear that realizing the particular grace of our Father now will shut in the grand, ever-retreating, and infinite horizon of possibility for its future displays.

So I testify of Mr. Parker's aspect to me; not forgetting how differently he appeared to others, and not presuming to imagine the decisions of the central Judge. I may have said only what will either offend his foes or grieve his friends; while nothing I have named in his praise but has been my own pleasure, and every contrary word my pain. Spiritual greatness is too rare for us not to lament our inability to accept any one, who has won wide distinction, into its rank for a model man. But this man lacked the repose and simplicity inseparable from the truly great. He stood not like the mountains, that rise to heaven, and refresh the earth. He moved not like the orbs, that send lustre afar, without leaving their own station. Sad to the soul is it to write a sentence any reader will deem detraction; but lying commendation would be more sad. Mr. Parker's vindication of the rights of men is his glory: his contribution to that general license of mind and speech and pro-



cedure, which is the main evil of our time and land, is the shadow of a fame that can never shine in vertical light. Freedom is a blessed boon, but not the best; and it becomes a bane when insubordinate to truth. We have sown a seed of such independence, as gives us, in not a few of our youth, and in some even of our moral teachers, a crop of crudity and conceit. In the intellectual generation of this day largely appear the pride and vanity, boastfully by those, whose particular offspring they are, baptized for courage and progress. Standing still or advancing slowly is better than bravado and haste.

But although mournfully feeling that Mr. Parker in some ways promoted incidentally this unhappy tendency, while aiming at the wholesome liberation of the mind, I believe his unfortunate influence will be transient, and his good must abide. Not being a member of the Unitarian denomination, or of any association so styled, I may trust that my general witness to a remarkable character is devoid of wounded recollection or theological bias, while it involves no one but myself; and, whatever ground others may take, I must declare it is not Mr. Parker's application of any true learning to modify the claim of the Scriptures, or to expose any holding of them in a superstitious regard, that would excite my remonstrance, or call from me any sentiment but of respect. The Bible does not support Christianity: Christianity

supports the Bible ; and Christianity will be in heaven, whither it might seem some persons expect also to carry the paper and print of their sacred books with them when they die. Insulting our religion, by decrying its whole supernatural character, is another matter, which the Unitarians did not consider with Mr. Parker too soberly. To make light of it would have been to break up their order, and surrender their commission. The question of miracles, as certain external signs of the supernatural, has its vital importance, not, as many thoughtlessly fancy, chiefly in their value as proofs, or any use to be made of them, great as their use undoubtedly is, but practically in the result attendant on a process instituted to cut them out. Who can cut them out, without cutting into the inmost verity of the gospel ? If they could be removed safely, without touching the truth or spirit, present influence or immortal prophecy, of our faith, even then of what power and beauty would there be a loss from the record so dear of the life of Jesus ! For, of all the philosophic pretences of the day, none is so shallow as that of any offence to the soul and deepest understanding of man, in what we, with imperfect language, call superhuman deeds. So the princes themselves of science among us will affirm. What but the laws of nature, in the production and propagation of all kinds of life, are the subject of the latest scientific dispute ? while no

advocate on either side but puts the miracle somewhere, so inexpugnably strong are nature and the truth of God. Supernaturalism, in the education of the human soul on earth or in heaven, may change its instances; old wonders may successively fall under ever-enlarging laws: but new marvels will rise in their stead; and, after some æons on his eternal track, the sciolist, who casts out as chaff every prodigy he cannot now master, may learn to be at once more modest and more wise.

Mr. Parker, in his criticism of the gospel-facts, appears peculiarly unsound. The tide seemed to set his way; but it was only an eddy. Its main flow in the channel of divine manifestations will be evident in the future as in the past. But peace be with him, who knows more now than any of us! Peace everlasting to the soldier who has laid down his arms; who had in him such pity as well as wrath, that "he could not bear to throw away a bunch of withered flowers," and such generosity as to bestow his splendid library on the city of his home! Yet, seductive as is all transcendental speculation, we reflect, at his sepulchre and over his page, on the vain magnificence of every plan to make out of abstract intellectual axioms a religion for the human race. Some unsettled thinkers are daunted at each fresh rationalistic demonstration, as a necessary step forward in the manifest destiny of truth. In a timid

policy, affecting bravery, they would go with it. They have not learned how old and various is error, and that this anti-supernatural peculiarity is no surprise now, but tried and rejected in manifold forms ages ago, although its argument must be met ever anew. The witnesses in the case have been so numerous and so grand as to establish it for nothing less than a conclusion of the mind of man, that reason alone, separate from providence and history, unhelped by divine interposing, and unwedded to the Holy Spirit, cannot suffice for the salvation of the soul. What more than a cursory glance at the condition of the world is needful to prove that the office of him, who, being reason to us in addition to reason in us, proves himself the Word made flesh, is not yet over? While the thought of God can never be spent, unspent too, as yet, is the manifestation of that thought in time, in the mission of his Son. Whoever feels that the last drop has flowed, and the fountain of this favor is dry, will, of course, cease to preach Jesus Christ. But be it our thanksgiving to Heaven, that the civilization of the earth still grows, while its redemption advances, by looking to him as its Head!



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## CIRCULAR TO OUR FRIENDS.

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The experiment of publishing a series of tracts upon Liberal Christianity entered upon in the month of October, 1858, has been eminently successful, with only a moderate outlay of effort and expense. The publications of our Society, under the following titles, are before the public :

### Volume One.

- I. Liberal Christianity, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.
- II. The Gospel of the Day, by Rev. O. B. Frothingham.
- III. Liberal Christianity a Practical Religion, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.
- IV. The Father the only and the sufficient God, by Rev. S. Longfellow.
- V. The Natural History of the Devil, by Rev. M. D. Conway.
- VI. What is Infidelity, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.
- VII. Thy Holy Child Jesus, by Rev. Wm. H. Furness, D. D.
- VIII. The Relation of this Life to the Next, by Rev. T. Starr King.
- IX. A Church and its Methods, by Rev. James Freeman Clarke.
- X. The Bottomless Pit, by Rev. Samuel Osgood, D. D.
- XI. The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.
- XII. A Case of Evangelical Church Discipline, by Emerson W. Keyes.

### Volume Two.

- I. Cornering Religion, by Rev. C. A. Bartol.
- II. On the Alleged Decay of Faith, by Rev. Orville Dewey, D. D.
- III. A Religious Experience, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.
- IV. What do Unitarians Believe? by Rev. Samuel J. May.
- V. Believing Much and Believing Little, by Rev. O. B. Frothingham.
- VI. The Simplicity of Liberal Christianity, by John Pierpont.
- VII. Theodore Parker, by Rev. A. D. Mayo.

In entering upon a new year and a new series, we desire to increase and extend our operations. We believe there is no way in which our cause can be so surely and steadily advanced as by the thorough dissemination of tracts, calculated to awaken interest in the great religious questions of the age. And we confidently appeal to our friends for aid and co-operation in this work. The publications of the coming year we intend shall equal in interest and ability those of the past, and at a very small cost any person will be able to enjoy the best thoughts of the ablest writers upon Liberal Christianity. Subscribers of one dollar a year will be furnished with the whole series for 1860 (twelve in number), at the rate of two copies a month sent by mail, at periodical rates of postage; and to purchasers who desire tracts for more extended circulation, they will be supplied at the rate of \$2.00 a hundred. The objects of the society being solely to publish and disseminate the ideas of Liberal Christianity, the entire receipts in their treasury will be devoted to those ends with no profits accruing to any one.

We require a sufficient amount of funds to publish our new series, in much larger editions than our limited means have hitherto allowed; and our ability to do so will be greatly augmented by an early contribution. As only one dollar a year is required from each person, who cordially believes that a more liberal faith is necessary to the healthful growth of a Christian character, we earnestly invite all such, not only to contribute personally, but so to interest their friends in our behalf, that we may go on with confidence in our pecuniary success, as well as in the persistent advance of the cause to which we are so heartily devoted.

Bound copies of the first series of Tracts for the Times, can be obtained at fifty cents per volume.

Prices of New Series \$1 a year, for two copies a month. \$2 per hundred copies.

All subscriptions and applications for tracts, addressed by mail, with money enclosed, to Mrs. Lucy C. Mayo, 32 Lodge street, or Miss Nancie Burton, 70 Chapel street, Albany, N. Y.

## THEODORE PARKER.

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ON the 18th of May, 1860, THEODORE PARKER died at Florence. No American preacher of the present generation has so deeply and widely affected the American people as this man. We have not been deficient in men of commanding power, in religious affairs, during this period—CHANNING, BUSHNELL, PARKER, BEECHER, and others, second only to them. But none of these has so taken hold on the faith and life of this Republic, and irresistibly fixed the attention of the country, as he. Like all great men, he has divided the generation, there being no neutral party about him; the people separated into friends and foes. In some regions he is hailed as the founder of a new religion, which will supersede Christianity; in other quarters, in public meetings, prayers have been offered for his destruction.

There are men who float through life on a shining wave of universal admiration—the idols of a whole generation. These are either men whose achievements lie in such peculiar directions that they do not disturb the interest, or awaken the conscience of the people, or men of matchless tact who spend existence in repeating in magnificent phrases, or acting in splendid ceremonial, what all intelligent persons confess to be true. But whoever would greatly move a whole age, must expect to become the center of a mortal conflict. THEODORE PARKER lifted America; of course America was divided about him; indeed, the conflict was too mighty for any man to endure. Five centuries ago such a preacher would have involved any people in a civil war. America fought about this man, according to its manner, till he withdrew across the sea to die, killed by the tempest himself had raised.

To be silent about him would only be a louder testimony than words. A portion of the American preachers will try to dodge him, either by actual silence, or by some well-balanced period in a sermon on other themes; but as well might the traveler to the Pacific ocean affect to ignore the Rocky

Mountains or the Mississippi river. He stretches clean across America, from the North-eastern boundary to the Messilla valley, and meets us wherever we look. Others will condemn him with all the bitterness of personal hostility joined to theological opposition; for he has been for fifteen years the master-heretic at whom every great doctor and little exhorter has thrust his lance. He will be praised in terms of unqualified admiration by numbers of gifted minds, and thousands of our countrymen. This pulpit cannot overlook him; it has no motive to be in any way unjust to his great fame; it is not the unqualified eulogist of any man. Its only purpose now is the honest endeavor to set forth, within the limits of a brief discourse, such an estimate of THEODORE PARKER as has been obtained by fifteen years' study of his works, an anxious observance of his whole more public career, and a personal acquaintance with the man.

Your preacher, therefore, desires you to go along with him, while, not as partisan or opponent, but in the exercise of his duty as a minister of Liberal Christianity, he offers what appears to him the truth about THEODORE PARKER, as a man, as a preacher, as a public reformer.

First, let me speak of THEODORE PARKER as a man. It is the worst vice of our partisanship in Church and State, that we measure the man by his theories, rather than judge the theories and conduct by the man. The first thing to be observed in any human influence is the nature from which it proceeds. No man can stray outside of his own nature. Every creed about religion is a man measuring off infinity by the rule put into his hand when he became a living soul. Every career is the outward expression of a character. The chief thing we need to know about any body is: What kind of person is he? What are his natural endowments, his acquirements, his experiences? For what kind of investigation or activity is he fitted? In what region of speculation or life does he operate? Thus only can we know what we have a right to expect from him, and by what measures of judgment we shall try him. The indiscriminating many suppose that power in one region indicates power everywhere, and claim for one sort of mind what only another can accomplish. A wise man first learns what kind of human being he is dealing with, and assigns him the fit rank in his own department of creation.

The outward life of THEODORE PARKER, need not long detain us. He was born in Lexington, Mass., fifty years ago.



He seems never to have been at a loss what to do. His father's blood and his mother's milk flowed one way; and he marched from his cradle to college, from Harvard to Germany, in a victorious career of broad and massive scholarship—marched from the little pulpit in West Roxbury, into the Boston Melodeon and Music Hall, where for fifteen years his sermons, preached on Sunday mornings, repeated as lectures all over the Northern States, scattered as books and pamphlets over the Christian world, wrought like a force of nature in our civilization. He worked till he died, as literally slain at his post as if shot down by an enemy. There were no side-currents to his life. He rose on the country like a mighty river, that pours its irresistible current, tearing through awful mountains, or spreading through quiet meadows, broadening and deepening, ever swifter but never changing, till it falls into the sea.

There is no need to mistake the nature or character of this great man. He was the most characteristic child of the Puritan stock that has made New England what she is in American civilization. New England has more elements in her constitution than is generally remembered. She received the conservative English gentleman, the hard-hearted English trader, the stony English radical—indeed the various sorts of people that make the British Empire the Proteus it is in the affairs of men. But the central stock that made New England what she ever has been, and must be, was the middle-class English Puritan.

The Puritan was not made so by his adherence to a special orthodox creed; but his characteristics lay deeper than any creed. He was a man in whom the element of self-conscious moral individuality overpowered every other. His intellect was vigorous, keen, and wonderfully subtle in making logical distinctions—the most tremendous machine, within its range, that ever was set up on this planet. His higher reason was feebler, and herein was he greatly inferior to the German type of his race. His passions were a pent-up volcano, his affections penetrated with passion; and he loved God and regenerate men with a fiery intensity, and hated the devil and his servants with the fierceness of extermination. His imagination was of the kind that realizes practical results, projects vast enterprises, and illustrates facts and ideas by vivid pictures; but in the higher region of imagination he was deficient. Thus it was impossible for him to get out of his own personality, and estimate any other kind of man justly.

His religious sentiments were intense and violent ; his love of God an over-mastering passion that often recoiled into sternness and fear ; his love of truth and morality, a fixed determination of his soul. But all these faculties were bound together in one iron mass, by a will which divined its purpose and pursued its ends like a fate. This was not a very broad or a very lovely type of character, but, within its own range of a practical realization of the higher moral life, the most efficient the world has seen. Its highest mission was to establish practical righteousness in the actual world—to make God's moral law the corner-stone of American affairs—and towards that end it has toiled with unerring patience and success. This character is constantly cropping out in American life. It is the *substratum* of the most influential men of New England origin.

THEODORE PARKER was the largest and broadest man that has yet come of that great Puritan stock. By texture and temperament he belonged to the average New England race—the same *kind* of a man that can be found in a thousand farm houses, country stores, and lawyers' offices in the Eastern States. His nature was pitched to the key of the great common Puritan consciousness. His intellect was an engine of terrific force, that moved on, crashing and craunching its way alike through all regions of human thought and life. Yet every where it took only the facts within its range ; and, from the comparative weakness of the higher reason, his vast knowledge was often crude, and his conclusions sometimes partial and unsatisfactory. His affections and passions were melted into one ; and he loved God, truth, goodness and liberty with a force like the ebb and flow of the ocean that beat on his native shores.

But there is a realm where the highest love blends with the finest imagination, in a faculty that appreciates natures of every mold, and does full justice to every form of character and society, sees the Divine Providence in partial events, trusts God perfectly, and believes forever in man. Such a man can perform gigantic service with a hopeful and unruffled soul, and reform men and institutions by developing the germs of life they actually possess. Here it was that this man was chiefly lacking. For, loving God intensely, he hardly trusted in His providence, and wore himself out in trying to do providential work. Loving good men of his own kind, he always found it hard to restrain his contempt for other styles of goodness than his own, and he persecuted bad men like a Nemesis. Believing theoretically in human nature, and claiming

liberty for every soul, he yet was practically as intolerant as Cotton Mather, and consigned every heretic to Music Hall religion to Heli—as he understood it. His will was inflexible, He was the most positive of all positive men, never for an instant relaxing the tension of character, or so passing out into vital sympathy with other forms of life, that he could be mistaken for any body than himself. He talked down, acted down, lived down to every body, every race, nation, system, religion. He was always Jove or Olympus, and we, at best, the inferior deities. He was inflexibly honest, completely sincere, irreproachably pure and correct in personal life. No man ever lived in America who more conscientiously made himself all he could be, and did his appointed work more efficiently than he.

And although his theology was not that of the men who landed on Plymouth Rock, his influence in the nineteenth, corresponded well to the influence of the Puritan of the seventeenth century. He was our CROMWELL. He prayed tremendously; thought fiercely; ransacked literature and life for ammunition and arms; and then fixed his eye on the despotism, sin, and superstition of America, and moved towards it as the whirlwind sweeps over the prairie. Wherever he went something broke. Every tyrant in the United States wished him dead. Every priest who decried the intellect, every politician who insulted man, every merchant who lied for money, felt him like a sword in the marrow. Contemplative men who saw further than he, but were weaker at the center, kept out of his path as he thundered on. But he had a great following of the most vigorous, earnest, efficient people of the country.

He was not our greatest philosopher, or scholar, or theologian, or poet, or saint. In all these regions he was largely sympathetic and widely informed. He, indeed, sometimes fancied himself one or the other of these, and seemed to count his practical life as preacher a wandering from his mission. But he was the great *Puritan reformer of American civilization*. Broader than GARRISON, more human than CHANNING, more practical than EMERSON, clearer-headed than BEECHER, and as energetic as STEPHEN DOUGLAS, he found his place, and did his work. It was a great place and an illustrious work. He was a great man, with great powers and great deficiencies. He was as good as such an order of mind can well be. His life was consistent with itself throughout.

As he grew sick, he became more intensely THEODORE PARKER; and his last words expressed a sublime scorn for the poor body that had broken down before he had regenerated American life.

Other men are gifted with a wider nature, a being of finer texture, and a view of life more nearly resembling the estimate of Providence. Many kinds of men can see where he lacked some valuable element of character; and his system must share the fate of all human creeds, by contributing its mite to the creed of Christendom; but who can pretend to be more faithful to his own mission, or more powerful in his own vocation, than he? America has produced many wiser and more saintly men, but none of greater force of character, or rectitude of life, or consecration to liberty and righteousness—none who in the formative period of our national character will wield a stronger influence, and longer abide in the best heart of the Republic.

Such was THEODORE PARKER, the man. His character as preacher was just this great positive manhood carried into the Church. He was no negative force, but, beyond any past or living American preacher, constructive, in the most vital and practical sense of the term.

Every great preacher must possess two positive qualities—a constructive theology, and the power to apply it to the every-day life of mankind. THEODORE PARKER was great in both these regions. He was grounded in a mighty faith in the fundamental truths of religion; and he applied every fact of his creed to the common life of every soul.

As a theological preacher, he may be justly called the *Apostle to the American Gentiles*. He knew more about the practical unbelief of the American people in religion than any man in the country. He saw that the Republic is full of men and women who have been forced into a position of open hostility to, or half-conscious rejection, not of the disputed points of the creeds, so much as the radical truths of religion itself. These persons are not the worst, but often the best in America. They are found in and out of the churches, the leading men in every department of our life. Often the people do not know their skepticism, for they regret their own lack of faith, and have no desire to sadden any body with it. But there it lies, in the bottom of the national life, like a cold, damp stone in the bottom of a well; the unbelief in the existence of God, the spirituality of man, the immortality of the



soul, the eternal obligation of duty; and its results, are becoming more and more evident in the practical atheism of our public and private life. There are large circles of gifted people, whole regions of society, vast interests of the nation, that go on with no notice of religion, as an element to be considered. And this skepticism in the better informed explains the barbarism of the masses below them, and involves the most fearful phenomena of our social state.

THEODORE PARKER saw that this unbelief has two prominent sources—the false popular theology, and the low spiritual state of the Church, and the materialistic tendencies of our new national life. To meet the necessity of the case he proposed his system of “the Absolute Religion.” This “Absolute Religion,” when examined, is simply the religion originally preached by Jesus Christ, divested of all its later additions, and somewhat imperfectly apprehended. He went back to the standpoint of Jesus, and made the central truth of his theology the union of man and God in a relation of perennial inspiration as parent and child. In his creed, God is the Infinite Wisdom Beauty, Power and Love—as he often says, “the Father and Mother of the universe.” Nature is His physical expression; all its laws and powers denote His actual presence. Man is His highest work, His immortal child, born with all the capacities for an eternal career of progress towards his Creator. The presence of God in the soul is a natural fact of man’s being, no more a miracle or an accident than any other fact of his nature. In the region of the Spirit that underlies all others, abides God for evermore, perpetually inspiring faith in Himself, in duty, in immortality, in all that makes religion possible.

Every faculty of man is thus in contact with God. Every great achievement of man is half his own work, and half the Divine work. The best of every thing known, thought, felt, imagined, done by man, is the light from the throne of God, touching the summit of his endeavor. Every form of past religion is the attempt of man to express in creed and life this radical faith of his nature, which is developed as he grows in other things. Every religion holds men by its truth, not its falsehood. The men who have been most highly gifted and profoundly inspired by God in the religious life, are the leaders of the race. And of all these he proclaims Jesus pre-eminent and pure Christianity identical with the Absolute Religion. Man’s life is spiritual and eternal—an infinite discipline in the knowledge and service of God. Truth and duty are sacred and

immutable; and the final decision of the entire nature is the practical test of truth and duty for every soul. Religion is thus taken out of the monopoly of churches and priests, out of the realm of superstition and unreality, and made identical with the best manhood, the best womanhood, the highest private character, the best civilization. An irreligious man is simply a man half-grown, unnatural, uncultivated, in the highest sense unmanly. Society without faith is barbarism, more civilized as it grows in intelligent appreciation and persistent practice of pure religion.

This circle of ideas, which are also the fundamental ideas of the Christianity of Jesus, was the great central force of his theology. All his preaching was founded on them, and filled and illuminated by their radiant energy. With them he girded himself as with shining armor, and went forth to meet the terrible host of skepticism and sin in the Republic. He at once arrested and more and more enchained the attention of the leading American mind. He won thousands of atheists and half-atheists, and unbelievers in some radical fact of religion, to faith in God, duty, man, immortality. No man ever created such a powerful revival of fundamental religion in the country. The revivals of WHITEFIELD, EDWARDS, and the late "awakening" dealt chiefly with the more superficial elements of human nature and character, and will leave comparatively feeble traces on our civilization. But all the time for the last twenty years all over our land, strong, active men and women have been silently changing from unbelief to belief, through the potent influence of THEODORE PARKER's presentation of Religion. They could resist the church, with its barbaric creeds, its worldly policy, its social inhumanities; they could resist the popular interpretation of the Bible, as absurd and immoral; but when THEODORE PARKER appeared, preaching that religion is natural, and the noblest men and women have the most of it, they were disarmed, converted, and saved, through all their spiritual and practical life.

So THEODORE PARKER was not a destructive but a constructive. There were doubtless, negative elements in his theology. He underrated the use of institutional religion, and was never wholly just in his estimate of the Church. He had little executive ability in reforming ecclesiastical affairs, but passed his life preaching to a mass-meeting the great ideas which must inevitably modify every religious organization in America. He announced the true principle of Biblical interpretation—

*that the Bible was made for man and not man for the Bible—making human nature the test of the value of every thing between those lids.* But in his application of the principle, he was often hasty, over-credulous in the reception of crude German theories, reckless and clumsy in his dealing with facts which require, not a logic-machine, but a refined spiritual perception, for their appreciation. We think his summary rejection of what are called the miracles of Jesus, unwarranted; and we often feel that he missed the deepest lesson of an incident or principle, from want of patience, or lack of original power to reach it.

His comprehension of Jesus was variable and unsatisfactory. It was more honest than is often found. He said: "Let us look at this personality in a clear light—no myths, no delusions. Who was Jesus? What kind of a man was he? What has he done for mankind?" He went about his work with all sincerity, and did his best to know that august character. He failed, because he had not the elements within himself to measure the Christ. He had neither the refinement of sentiment, nor calmness of soul, nor apprehending imagination, to gather up the scattered *memorabilia* of the Master, and construct a consistent character. There are whole regions of the life of Jesus to which he was never admitted. Hence his Christology is the most imperfect feature of his theology—the great mistake, indeed, that must forever somewhat estrange him from the full sympathy of the most highly-cultivated Christians. It was not the fault of his general system, so much as a personal lack of nature, that brought him occasionally into an antagonistic or patronizing attitude to Jesus, repulsive to thousands of his most generous appreciators and truest friends.

In general, it may be said, his theology did not make sufficient allowance for the weaknesses of humanity. He too much ignored, like the sect of "Friends," the great economy of secondary helps, whereby, through brotherhood, institutions, society, Jesus, we lean on the arm of some assistant, all the way through the earlier stages of the religious life. His heaven is the real heaven, but it shines like the new Jerusalem in the sky, and the road is not well made to get to it. His creed was the skeleton of Christianity; all its great fundamental ideas are there; but it lacked just what made "absolute religion" Christianity in the soul of Jesus—the interfusion of all those majestic ideas with a rich, warm, personal significance—the solution of a system in a divinely human soul. Religion, in THEODORE PARKER'S creed, is a

sublime philosophy, true as far as it positively goes. Religion, in Jesus, is a celestial life, containing all true philosophies and theologies, melted into a love that subdues everything in the world of matter and mind.

Yet, though lacking the concluding graces of Christianity, his creed was much nearer Jesus than any popular catechism or any large church in America. If there is to be a charge of infidelity in the premises, they are the infidels who metamorphose God and Jesus into a triune barbaric deity, and man into a native demon, and life into a probation for a heaven or hell equally repulsive to common-sense and common humanity, and the Bible into a bewitched book wherein every sentence is a spell to charm with, and the Church and religion into a drama and an unreality. But it is wrong to bandy about the term "infidel," as we do. The Churchmen and THEODORE PARKER were both honest in their belief; they are both somewhat wrong in their estimate of religion. God will treat them both a good deal better than they ever treated each other; and truth will come forth, and humanity will grow, by the positive side of each.

With this theology, THEODORE PARKER went forth to assail the practical sin of the American people. He did not concern himself about the philosophy of sin, or waste any breath speculating on "Adam's fall," or seek to cure the real wickedness of this Republic by a middle-age theory of "sacrificial atonement." It was enough for him that men as he knew them, women as he found them, were living below their higher nature, and wickedness abounded over all the land. He had vast knowledge of our American life and character, of the average motives that move average people, of what all kinds of folks are thinking and doing in all directions. He had a matchless way of preaching on practical life. His style was one of the most transparent mirrors in which high truth has been reflected—scriptural at times in its simple power, comprehension, and adaptation to human needs. He talked to men, women, and children, in a plain, straightforward way, that unsealed the heart, unveiled hypocrisies, and exposed iniquities. With one illustrious living exception, he was the greatest practical preacher in the English tongue this century has seen, and to find his peer we must go back to the early race of giants in the English Church.

The faults of his practical preaching were the defects of his nature. He was the most positive of moralists, the great preacher among Protestants. The severe structure of his per



sonal character often narrowed his large creed of divine and human love into something more like the Hebrew than the Christian bearing towards sinners. In many of his practical sermons he is, indeed, an "angel in the house," lifting up and illuminating life by his large and genial charity for all. But not unfrequently he comes down on human weakness and wickedness, like Moses thundering down Mount Sinai upon the worshipers of the golden calf, rather than like Jesus praying from Mount Calvary: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Jesus Christ would have censured the Scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites of our day more terribly than THEODORE PARKER, but he would never have left rankling in their souls the stings of personal bitterness that too often accompanied the rebukes of the American preacher. It seems occasionally as if he hated his enemies. He sometimes used weapons, in his defense against his opponents, that wound the user more than the victim. But this was not his prevailing mood, and he strove manfully against it—indeed, resisted it better than MILTON or LUTHER, or most of the great reformers and preachers of our day.

Oh! it is so easy for any quiet little priest, enveloped in the spotless lawn of his sacerdotal proprieties, shut out from the awful realities of American life by a church system as unreal as a house in the clouds, passing his balmy days in the sweet atmosphere of the gentler moods of amiable women and retired gentlemen, to talk of the "meek and lowly Jesus," and sneer at what he calls the coarseness and violence of the PARKERS and BEECHERS of our day. But let one of those same peaceable gentlemen be hoisted up to the stormy mountain-top, where these men stand, and see like them the hosts of God and Satan in terrible conflict below, feel the breath of the battle in his nostrils, and try to stand firm amid the curses of half a continent, and the adulation of another half, and we suspect there would be either an extinction of the priest, or a revival of charity. It is godlike to be always strong, and sweet, and calm as the sun in heaven, looking down on a battle-field; but who of us has so acquitted himself in the little tumult of his own narrow sphere, that he can throw stones at LUTHER wrestling with Romanism; MILTON, SOUTH, TAYLOR, BEECHER, grappling with the powers of earth and hell, in a fight for life and death? Let us never excuse THEODORE PARKER's faults of temper, and lapses into Judaism; he doubtless sees them now more clearly than we ever saw them on earth. But let us try to be one tithe of the

positive force on the right side that he was, before we assail him, as he is too often assailed, by men who surely have no time to spare from their own reformation, to recommend him to the mercy of the All-loving Father, who looketh not so much at the mind, the temper, the tongue, as the manhood that underlies all.

In the true spirit of the old Puritan divine, THEODORE PARKER combined the vocation of social and political reformer with scholar and preacher. He was one of the most remarkable and influential public men in the country. He vindicated the "eminent domain" of the pulpit over the entire life of the nation, and applied unflinchingly the law of Christian morality to public affairs and prominent men. He was the strongest man on any occasional platform or stump he mounted, always presenting his views on topics of general reform with a force of intellect, a breadth of observation, a homely style of address, and a wealth of learning, that quite overshadowed those whose lives have been spent in this peculiar vocation. He was a great aid to all divisions of the reform movement; for his views were generally broader, more practical, and nearer to common sense, than the dogma of any of these exclusive parties.

His services in the great war against negro slavery in America were invaluable. He stepped into the post of danger when the risk was most imminent, and laid about him with a vigor that silenced every enemy. If his hot heart sometimes overran molten lava against the despots who are plotting to subvert the free institutions of the Republic, and his burning hands sometimes almost felt after the sword, we may remember that the race from which he came was not accustomed to eternal forbearance with tyranny, and that without the PARKERS of the English and American Revolutions we should now have no rights worth contending for. His efforts for the cause of temperance, the elevation of woman, the relief of the perishing classes, popular education, the reform of the penal code, the vindication of religious freedom, were constant; and his books contain some of the ablest treatises on these and kindred themes ever sent forth to the people. Wherever American barbarism showed its hideous form, was he found belaboring the monster with the power of a hundred men.

Doubtless, there was a good deal of noise, and some other disagreeable concomitants, in this twenty years' service as an agitator and reformer; but much that was called harshness and bitterness in him was only force. He understood very

well that, if a preacher in New England would awake the everglades of Florida, and be heard above the roar of the streets of New Orleans, he must fire a very large cannon on Boston Common, charged with a good deal of powder, and shotted heavily. Moreover, it was evident that in that same town were a good many people who, from personal interest, did not want any such cannon discharged at the "peculiar institution;" a larger number who thought the occasional crack of a very small ornamental pocket-pistol, with a blank cartridge, amply sufficient for the purpose; others, who cared for nothing in particular but their own elegant leisure, and hated noise on principle. To all such the spectacle of this grim giant, towering above his sixty-four pounder, black with powder, and hot with ramming down his shot, more fierce with the shock and stench of every broadside, was eminently disagreeable. He damaged the trade of the Boston merchants, spoiled the prospects of a whole school of gentlemanly politicians, shook the steeples of the respectable churches, and broke a good many panes of plate-glass, and sent a puff of hot smoke and a thundering concussion in upon many a pleasant dinner-party at the "West End."

Still, it was only the old fact—strong measures for great evils. If you want to reach a public evil two centuries old, entrenched in the interest, prejudices and traditions of thirty-two great States, steadily marching on with tireless steps to a crisis of barbarism or civilization, I suspect that you will never do much until you make up your mind to work as hard against, as its best friends work for it, and cease to take counsel of those who fear the tumult of a fray more than they fear the downfall of liberty, and love "order" so well that they would live in Vienna rather than be deprived of it. It is a sufficient answer to Boston conservatism to say that the whole pulpit of that city, during the present generation, has not done so much effective service for the abolition of slavery, and kindred practical evils, as that fifteen years of THEODORE PARKER's ministry. Look towards that city, the foremost of America in culture and morality, and this man was always seen from any portion of America. Over the Berkshire hills, over the Alleghanies, over the Blue Ridge, over the Rocky Mountains, over the Sierra Nevada, men saw from afar that stern, silent face, that upright form, glowing with suppressed fire, looking defiance at every shape of despotism, beaming good-cheer on every noble enterprise of civilization.

Doubtless, the criticisms of the men of his own town were "founded in fact." He probably was too self-conscious, perhaps, too full of his own sublimity, too little considerate of the rights and feelings of his brethren, too bitter in his castigation of enemies whom he could afford to forget, too eager and hot to be trusted with the actual management of public affairs. And his estimates of great men were rarely just and true to life. He measured every character by his own style of manhood, and made small allowance for the inevitable differences of constitution and vocation. His portraits of the ADAMSES, CHANNING, WEBSTER, TAYLOR, WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON, are full of learning, and valuable for strong views of certain broad qualities of their subjects; but no such men ever actually lived as those gigantic figures he chalked out on the side of Music Hall. They were like the huge piles of rocks and hills we call "Anthony's Nose," and the "Old Man of the Mountain." Get far enough off, in certain vast combinations of light and shadow, and you see the old man's face, and take off your hat to the saint's nose; but you may break your neck to no purpose, searching for the resemblance among the precipices, and ravines, and stormy summits themselves. The same infelicity of nature that destroyed his estimate of Jesus, has spoiled every picture of a great man he ever drew.

But who is sufficient for all things? When we say that THEODORE PARKER was always unmistakably on the right side, in every conflict between barbarism and civilization in the Republic, we have pronounced an eulogy that can be offered to few great men of the present generation. After all subtractions, he was, on the whole, the widest, most powerful, most influential of all the ardent and able host of reformers that have agitated the country for the last quarter of a century.

It is said to have been the dream of THEODORE PARKER to write a great work on the "Religious Development of the Races." He more than hints that his mind was fixed for many years on some permanent work of religion. We doubt if he would have done more if he had written it. For, spite of his vast acquirements, and his powers of acquisition, he was pre-eminently a popular moral teacher. He gravitated to his place, and for fifteen years spoke to the American people in their own tongue, on all the mighty themes that concerned them as men and States. He had positive merit enough as an elevating influence in American life, to stock a



whole General Convention of ordinary ministers. His mistakes and failures will be forgotten, and every pulpit in the land be finally refreshed by his positive ministry. It was enough if he had only taught the people that an honest man, loving God, and serving humanity, is superior to any professional priest, is the best result of all churches, and creeds, and governments.

For when I look back on my acquaintance with THEODORE PARKER, I seem to forget the scholar, the preacher, the thunderer on the platform. I have seen him in his study, with his deep eyes searching the volume before him, as if he would tear the innermost soul out of the author. I have listened to his most forcible addresses, and marveled how a plain, homely man, with a low, monotonous voice, reading a big manuscript through his spectacles, standing like a block, could so pour the fiery flood of his passion and intellect through and through the thousands that sat as one hearer below his desk. I have sat out the night with him by my own fireside, when his strong talk poured on resistless as the Atlantic waves we could hear in the pauses breaking on the beach, carrying along men, systems, institutions, peoples, as floats on its mighty tide. I have climbed three pair of stairs in a Western hotel, and in a little room under the roof found this man, before breakfast, glued to his chair, writing sermons as with his whole fist. But I never could retain any thing in him but the mighty, brave, aggressive, righteous manhood, that made him so dear to all lovers of liberty, so terrible to all who love evil and tyranny.

He was, perhaps, not so much the creator as the creature of the great Liberal movement in American life. The American people, as a preliminary to their realization of a true democracy, are now changing their faith from the mixture of Paganism, Judaism, Christianity and Americanese, which makes the popular Church, to that absolute religion which is the pure and simple doctrine of Jesus Christ. Hitherto this movement has thrown up several sects, some three thousand churches, a variety of reform platforms, a multitude of inquiring people. Of the departed leaders, WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, HOSEA BALLOU, ELIAS HICKS and THEODORE PARKER are most illustrious. They differed from each other, but the same ground-swell created them all. The work is going on; we are not left desolate by the loss of this man, for all that was good and wise in him will be taken up by other hands. The people are greater than any or all their leaders,

and in God's time we shall have, on this soil, a faith that will gather, from all churches, all preachers, all reforms, every creed, the finest element and the deepest expression. Then we shall learn that the Christianity of Jesus is the eternal law of our human life, including all that has been well said of religion, adopting every true man as its disciple, saving every repentant people from ruin, regenerating the earth, and uniting the universe of souls around the throne of God. In this sublime Church of Christ THEODORE PARKER was a faithful minister. He has done his work, and gone to his reward.



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